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An Analysis of Dwight Moody's Urban Social Vision

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Submitted to the Open University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
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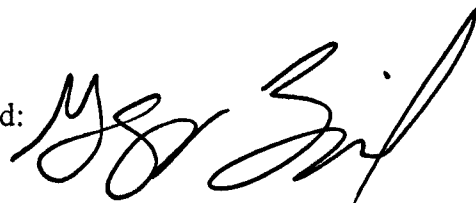
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Y. S. Zil', written in a cursive style.

## ***AN ANALYSIS OF DWIGHT MOODY'S URBAN SOCIAL VISION***

**GREGG QUIGGLE**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Open University, United Kingdom, November 2009.

### ***ABSTRACT***

Dwight Moody was the dominant English-speaking evangelist of the late nineteenth century. Much of Moody's work focused on urban centers. This thesis is an analysis of the origins of Dwight Moody's urban social vision. Specifically it studies the role Moody's theology played in the formation of his approach to the various urban ills that emerged during the mid to late nineteenth century in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The thesis seeks to show that theology drove Moody's approach to urban ills. Because of Moody's temperament and limited educational background, his personal experiences and personal relationships played an inordinately significant role in the formation of Moody's theology. The thesis explores these experiences and relationships demonstrating how they shaped Moody's theology. It concludes by outlining Moody's theological commitments that framed his social vision, and his resultant social activities.

The thesis concludes Moody was an evangelical whose social vision was in significant ways contiguous with those of earlier revivalists like Finney. Specifically, Moody, like Finney, always made evangelism his first priority. Further, similar to Finney, Moody was active in the temperance movement and various educational endeavors. However, Moody's conception of human sinfulness and commitment to premillennialism created a different set of expectations. Moody was dubious about the future of human society. He believed sin was the cause of poverty and that conversion brought freedom from sin and a desire to love others, especially the poor. He also believed the Bible commanded charity to the poor. Consequently, while Moody never fully embraced the Calvinistic goal of a righteous republic, he was concerned about the moral state of the country and the lot of the poor. In fact, Moody was active in numerous charitable endeavors targeting the urban poor. However, Moody maintained the only way to improve public morality and the suffering of the poor was through personal conversion, because only conversion would solve the problem of sin and generate charity. Thus, from Moody's perspective political or structural reforms divorced from evangelism were ultimately doomed to fail.



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## INTRODUCTION

The dominant evangelist of the late nineteenth century was an American from rural Massachusetts named Dwight Lyman Moody. By the time of his death in 1899, “Moody” was a household name throughout the English-speaking world. His work cast a long shadow over the evangelical world for decades after his death.<sup>1</sup> Moody lived in a time when both the United States and the United Kingdom were going through the throes of a major change. Urbanization, industrialization and immigration changed both societies and created a new set of issues for Christianity. Churches on both sides of the Atlantic struggled with dealing with the urban masses.<sup>2</sup>

Dwight Moody made this problem the focal point of his life’s work. Drawn to the city initially to make his fortune, he remained tied to the city as the focus of his work. Because of his fame and his urban emphasis, his approach to urban social ills is particularly intriguing.

### ***A. Statement of Purpose and Thesis***

Consequently, this study will focus on Dwight Moody’s urban social vision. It is not an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of Moody’s social work; rather, I will examine the motives and values that drove his work. Specifically, I am seeking to answer three questions.

First, although Moody lived before the full blossoming of what would become known as the Social Gospel movement, he was active during its embryonic stage.<sup>3</sup> As

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<sup>1</sup> David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 40-50.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 12-20; and Stanley Gundry, *Love Them In: The Life and Theology of Dwight Moody* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), 58-68.

<sup>3</sup> R. T. Handy, ed., *The Social Gospel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); C. H. Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale, 1940); N. A. Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1900* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1977). The dating of the beginning of the Social Gospel movement is difficult, although there is a consensus its roots go to the period right after the American Civil War.

we shall see, he interacted with men like Lyman Abbott and Washington Gladden; in fact, he invited them to speak at various campaigns and conferences. However, there is no evidence he seriously considered the approaches they were proposing relative to urban social ills. In short, why did he reject their theories in favor of a personal conversion strategy?

Second, was Moody's social vision a function of his relationship with the "robber barons," his middle-class Victorian values, or his commitment to the Republican Party? Moody maintained cordial relationships with many of the great captains in American industry, especially in Chicago. Names like McCormick, Field, Armour, Scott, and Farwell bankrolled much of Moody's work. What role did those relationships play in Moody's approach to urban ills? He also reflected many of the middle-class values of the day; was his social vision an extension of those values? Moody was also a committed Republican with a disdain for central government. Was this a critical factor in his insistence on individualistic solutions?

Third, how did Moody understand the relationship between addressing social ills and evangelism? What importance did he give to charity and attempts to formulate social change?

This is, therefore, an attempt to explicate Moody's social vision and examine its roots. It is my contention that Moody's work revealed some elements of what David Moberg called "the great reversal." Moody eschewed structural/legislative reforms to alleviate urban ills in favor of mass conversions of the poor. While he did occasionally speak to structural/legislative issues, he never engaged in a sustained dialogue or functioned as an advocate for these types of causes. Yet, at the same time, Moody created educational institutions at least partly for the purpose of educating the poor and improving their lives.

Moody's vision was also in significant ways contiguous with those of the earlier revivalists like Finney, the exception being that Moody's premillennialism created a different set of expectations. Specifically, it will be demonstrated in this thesis that Moody, like Finney, always made evangelism his first priority. Further, in continuity with Finney, Moody was active in the temperance movement and in various educational endeavors. As a young man, he was an abolitionist, a staunch defender of the Union and active in the Freedman's Bureau.<sup>4</sup> In addition, like Finney, he became involved in education. In fact, by the end of his career he was more of an educator than an evangelist.

As we shall see, Moody was hardly dispassionate about the plight of the poor. His life's work was directed towards the poor, especially the urban poor. He devoted himself to working among people many evangelical Protestants avoided as beneath them or incorrigible; consequently, he was deeply and personally involved in numerous relief works.

Therefore, Moody is best understood as approximating what Kathryn Long described as a transition from a more broadly "Calvinistic" public theology of revivalism to a more "pietistic" view, an approach he was introduced to through the Revival of 1857-1858 and the YMCA. Specifically, while Moody never fully embraced the Calvinistic goal of a righteous republic, he was concerned about the moral state of the country and the lot of the poor. However, he maintained the only way to improve public morality and the suffering of the poor was through pietistic means.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands was established in March 3, 1865 after two years of bitter debate. The Freedmen's Bureau, as it was commonly called, was to address all matters concerning refugees and freedmen within the states that were under reconstruction after the Civil War. The Freedmen's Bureau helped black communities to establish schools and churches. They also monitored the civil authorities in cases that involved African-Americans and acted as a clearinghouse of information to aid blacks in finding lost relatives.

<sup>5</sup> Kathryn T. Long, *The Revival of 1857-1858* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 124-25; and George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 85-93.

Consequently, while Moody expressed concern for society and acted to alleviate poverty, they remained secondary to personal conversion.

It is my contention that Moody's approach was a function of his theology. This is not to say there were not other factors involved; simply that Moody was primarily driven by his theology. Accordingly, while much of Moody's behavior cohered with middle-class sensibilities, at times he challenged those values when they conflicted with his theological convictions.

Further, Davidoff and Hall argued convincingly that the middle-class values of the Victorian era found their origin in the evangelical revivals in the early eighteenth century, making middle-class sensibilities a function of evangelical theology.

Evangelicalism provided a way for this class to differentiate itself from both the lower class and the aristocracy. It fuelled social concerns like temperance and abolition.

Evangelicalism served to define gender roles, providing structure for men and women of the middle class. Thus, it shaped family life, especially the family altar and the role of the man in the religion of the home. It also circumscribed public roles for men and women. While tightly prescribing the role of women in the public arena, it also provided outlets for women in the religious sphere. Finally, evangelicalism informed the middle class's personal ethics by emphasizing, work, selflessness, order and charity.<sup>6</sup>

I will show that theology was crucial to the formation of Moody's practice and that his theology was shaped by personal circumstances, experiences and temperament. Because of Moody's limited formal education, these are particularly important in his case.

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<sup>6</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 71-148.

Consequently, I will focus in this thesis on the role Moody's theological commitments played and especially how those theological commitments were formed. Although other studies have examined Moody's theology, this thesis is unique in its attempt to connect Moody's theology with his social vision and work. Specifically, I will argue that Moody's urban social vision was a function of theological commitments formed before the first United Kingdom campaign in 1873. Further, I will demonstrate these views were the product of his personal experience. Moody linked a profound understanding of God's love that had its origin in his childhood in Massachusetts with evangelicalism born from his early religious life in Boston and Chicago. Moody's early ideas on evangelicalism and revivalism were formed initially by his experience with the 1857–1858 Revival. I will demonstrate that those ideas were reinforced and augmented by his work with institutions like the Sunday school movement and the YMCA, and with men like Edwin Kirk, John V. Farwell, General O. O. Howard and Charles Spurgeon. The Civil War served to confirm these beliefs and temper his optimism about the trajectory of human history. I will explain that the introduction to premillennialism by Spurgeon and the Plymouth Brethren provided an alternative way to see history and served to spur his evangelistic work. Added to this was a unique conception of the work of the Holy Spirit born from interaction with Spurgeon, Methodism and an intense personal experience. I will show that this was all grounded by a commitment to the reliability of the Bible linked to a literal hermeneutic, again formed by his time with Spurgeon and the Plymouth Brethren.

In order to facilitate my argument, I have divided the thesis into six chapters. Chapter 1 explores the two critical contexts in which Moody lived and worked: evangelicalism and urbanization. Chapters 2 and 3 are a detailed look at the formation of Moody's theology with careful attention given to personal events and relationships. Chapter 4 is an overview of those parts of Moody's theology that are germane to his

social vision. Chapter 5 provides a look at Moody's social vision and explores his various social activities. Chapter 6 is a brief overview of Moody's influence and concludes the argument.

Moody was a gregarious, larger-than-life person. However, most importantly for this study, Moody was in many ways stereotypically American. He was a practical person, who was far more interested in how to do things than in why things worked. This meant he was a concrete thinker, not given to speculation—particularly theological speculation. In many ways, Moody's ultimate test of doctrine was its practicality and usefulness for evangelism. He was also innovative and entrepreneurial, somewhat like a salesperson who was always open to trying new things.

Pulling together these various elements, Moody forged a response to urban ills. Consequently, in a sense his own life became a template for his social vision. He practised things with others that had worked in his life. Accordingly, Moody believed that large numbers of individual conversions linked with charitable endeavours were the answer to the social problems facing urban centres.

## ***B. Literature Survey***

### ***1. Works Discussing Moody's Social Vision***

Only a few works have focused exclusively on Moody's social vision. Consequently, most of what has been published looked at Moody as part of a broader analysis of evangelicalism or revivalism. One such work is sociologist David Moberg's *The Great Reversal*. The title was taken from a term coined by historian Timothy L. Smith to describe the shift in position on social issues that occurred among American evangelicals between 1910 and 1930. Smith cited the Church of the Nazarene as an example of this shift. The Nazarenes had been founded with the primary goal of preaching holiness to the poor. In the denomination's early years, the leadership expressed support for various labor movements. However, in the years immediately

following World War I, this support had been replaced by an attitude of antipathy toward labor. Moberg cited the Christian Missionary Alliance and Episcopalians as undergoing similar shifts. In fact, he argued that many evangelical organizations in the United States abandoned liberal/progressive political and economic perspectives during the first three decades of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

Although Dwight Lyman Moody died in 1899, Moberg argued that he was a key figure in the impetus for this change. Moberg portrayed Moody as championing a point of view that saw the destruction of society as inevitable and therefore emphasized personal conversion rather than stressing both personal and social salvation. From Moberg's perspective, Moody was critical in ushering in this new social view among evangelicals.

In the late 1950s, two historians provided a detailed examination of American revivalism. Bernard Weisberger's *They Gathered at the River* (1958) and William G. McLoughlin's 1959 work, *Modern Revivalism: Charles G. Finney to Billy Graham*, placed Moody relative to the revivalist tradition. As such, they contrast with Moberg's broader survey of the American evangelicalism. Both scholars saw Moody as part of the conservative religious response to three perceived threats: industrialization, immigration and urbanization. Moody's religion was personal and conservative with its roots in rural America. He was presented as a good-hearted, nostalgic figure, out of touch with the realities of post-Civil War America. While his methods were at the cutting edge, his message was quaint. Consequently, they contended that Moody's ministry was

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<sup>7</sup> David Moberg, *The Great Reversal* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), 28-31; Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Richard V. Pierard, *The Unequal Yoke* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970). All these discuss the subject at some length and give evidence for severe subordination of social concern by about 1930. An account especially ambiguous as to what was lost is George M. Marsden, "The Gospel of Wealth, the Social Gospel, and the Salvation of Souls in Nineteenth-century America," *Fides et Historia* 5 (Fall, 1972 and Spring, 1973), 10-21.



reactionary and driven by socioeconomic factors.<sup>8</sup> They also concluded that Moody failed to reach the working classes in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

In a similar vein, British historian John Kent's *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), argued that Moody's work was an exercise in social control, wherein religion was used as a tool to keep the lower classes in line. Concentrating on the 1873–75 mission, Kent maintained that despite the large numbers of attendees, Moody failed to reach beyond lower-middle-class churchgoers. Thus, Kent concluded that revivalism remained bound in its influence to the evangelical, pietistic subculture.

Anne M. Boylan's *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790–1880*, Paul Boyer's *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* and James Gilbert's *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* also portrayed Moody as reactionary.<sup>9</sup> In these works, Moody was presented as part of an attempt by the conservative middle class to impose its values on the growing chaos of the emerging urban industrial centres in America. Consequently, Moody's social vision was presented as the product of American individualism and middle-class values. Darrell Robertson, in a 1982 Ph.D. dissertation, concurred and aptly summarized this interpretation, asserting that Moody "perhaps unwittingly made the New Testament Christ of the poor,

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<sup>8</sup> William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles G. Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), 167; and McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). These sentiments are echoed by Martin Marty in *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), 162-63; Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 743-46; and Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 135-89.

<sup>9</sup> Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790–1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

hungry and socially outcast into a sentimental, moralistic, legalistic and middle class Savior of the seventies.”<sup>10</sup>

David Bebbington’s 2005 work, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*, provided a somewhat different take on Moody’s social activity. (The volume is the third in a five-volume series published by InterVarsity Press that seeks to examine the history of evangelicalism by integrating social and intellectual history.) Although Bebbington was more interested in exploring evangelicalism during the time of Moody than in studying Moody specifically, he did discuss Moody at various points throughout the book and again commented on Moody’s social activity. Bebbington disputed Moody’s alleged turn from social concerns to just evangelism. In addition, he challenged the interpretation that Moody’s career was ultimately an exercise in social control. He concluded, “The evangelist wanted to help the mass of the people, not to make them submit to their masters.”<sup>11</sup>

I am also aware of one work that attempted to connect Moody to the politics of the day, an article by Tamar Frankiel. Moody was a committed Republican and Frankiel argued that Moody’s revivals were dominated by Republicans and thus served to bolster the Republicans’ sense of political solidarity.<sup>12</sup>

Edward J. Blum’s *Reforging the White Republic*, examined Moody’s role in the Reconstruction era. Blum argued that Moody’s message was instrumental in rebuilding the white republic by sanctifying reconciliation among northern and southern whites at the expense of African Americans. Specifically, Blum charged Moody with keeping quiet in the face of racial prejudice, choosing unity among whites over human unity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Darrel B. Robertson, “The Chicago Revival, 1876: A Case Study in the Social Function of a Nineteenth-Century Revival” (Ph. D. dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1982), 308- 9.

<sup>11</sup> Bebbington, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Tamar Frankiel [nee Sandra S. Sizer], “Politics and Apolitical Religion: The Great Urban Revivalism of the late Nineteenth Century,” *Church History* 48:5(1979): 81-98.

<sup>13</sup> Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2005), 144-45.

Finally, George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelism, 1870-1925*, gave a sense of how Moody's legacy continued in Fundamentalism. Published in 1980, the work pointed specifically to Moody's biblicism and employment of revivalist techniques as central to later Fundamentalism.<sup>14</sup>

While all these works provide insight into elements of Moody's social vision, they do not focus exclusively on Moody or his social vision. Therefore, they are not nuanced and understandably tend to examine only parts of Moody's work and motivation. Nonetheless, they provide valuable insights into Moody's social context and some of the rudiments of his social vision.

I am only aware of two studies that focus directly on Moody's social vision. In 1964, Dennis Olenik did an M. A. study at the Northern Illinois University entitled, *The Social Philosophy of Dwight L. Moody*.<sup>15</sup> This study consisted mostly of a description of some of Moody's behaviours towards the urban poor. Olenik concluded that Moody was a humanitarian with a social philosophy motivated by a deep religious faith in the power of God to change men's lives. However, Olenik never explored the nature of that faith or even demonstrated the essence of Moody's social philosophy.

The second, and by far the more important, is a 1969 study by Myron Chartier entitled, *The Social Views of Dwight L. Moody and Their Relation to the Workman of 1860-1900*.<sup>16</sup> Chartier's primary focus was to evaluate Moody's success in "relating the gospel of personal, regenerating power to the masses of workingmen in large industrial centers." He maintained Moody "failed as the movement appealed mostly to the middle

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<sup>14</sup> George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*.

<sup>15</sup> A bound copy is available at the archives of the Moody Bible Institute.

<sup>16</sup> Myron Chartier, *The Social Views of Dwight L. Moody and Their Relation to the Workman of 1860-1900* (Fort Hayes, Kansas: Fort Hays Kansas State College, 1969).

class.”<sup>17</sup> According to Chartier, Moody simply was neither intelligent nor sophisticated enough to understand the changes going on in the English-speaking world. He argued that Moody, in contrast to Finney, removed social elements from his message. Consequently, Chartier asserted Moody’s limitations would ultimately curtail the effectiveness of revivalism. Chartier concluded,

Although Moody was a great organizer and innovator, he lacked a keen intellect and failed to understand the great undercurrents, social, economic, and intellectual, that were occurring during his lifetime. Moody was unable to understand what the proponents of the social gospel were saying. His shunning of social Christianity isolated his form of revivalism from the great, developing issues of the nineteenth century. One wonders what his impact would have been if he had taken the prestige of his position as a renowned evangelist and attacked the problems of industrial American as Charles G. Finney had used revivalism to attack slavery in the 1840s.<sup>18</sup>

However, Chartier’s focus was to evaluate Moody’s success, not the roots of his social vision. While he made comments on Moody’s limitations, he also noted that, “In regard to Moody’s social views a potential doctoral dissertation awaits some energetic scholar.”<sup>19</sup> This study is an attempt to fill this void.

## ***2. Biographies of Moody***

Over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a veritable torrent of Moody biographies appeared. Indeed, by the time Moody’s son, Paul,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, v.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 71.

published his version of Moody's life entitled, *My Father*, in 1938, he pointed out that almost sixty biographies had already been written about his father.<sup>20</sup> These biographies can be grouped into roughly three time periods. The first group dated from the 1870s and at times seemed to be an attempt to capitalize on Moody's new celebrity. Many of these early portraits were quite haphazard and devotional in nature. However, there are five works worth noting.

The first, W. H. Daniels' *D. L. Moody and His Work*, was published in 1875. Daniels' work included a valuable collection of primary sources often based on oral interviews. These incorporated conversations with those familiar with Moody's work not only in Chicago but also in Great Britain. Daniels himself was a neighbour and friend of Moody from the period of Moody's early work in Chicago, and he pastored the Park Avenue Methodist Church there.<sup>21</sup> Second, Moody's admiring son-in-law, A. P. Fitt, released *A Shorter Life of D. L. Moody* in 1900. Published by a wing of Moody's evangelistic enterprise, this book was quite biased, but it provided an insider's look at Moody's family relationships and recounted some family anecdotes.<sup>22</sup> Third, also published in 1900, was a portrait of Moody by Charles Goss. Goss served as the pastor of Moody Church from 1885 to 1890. His work, *Echoes from the Platform and Pulpit*, provided a unique perspective on Moody and his relationship with Moody Church and the city of Chicago.<sup>23</sup> Finally, *Early Recollections of Dwight L. Moody*, released in 1907, was the work of a close friend and staunch supporter, John V. Farwell. Farwell provided a look at Moody's early career in Chicago and the first campaign in the United Kingdom.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Moody, *My Father* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1938).

<sup>21</sup> W. H. Daniels, *D. L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing, 1875).

<sup>22</sup> A. P. Fitt, *A Shorter Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1900).

<sup>23</sup> Charles Goss, *Echoes from the Platform and Pulpit* (Hartford: A. O. Worthington, 1900).

<sup>24</sup> John V. Farwell, *Early Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Winona Publishers, 1907).

By far the most important of these early biographies was *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (1900), by Moody's son, William R. Moody. William wrote the book at his father's request. The book is long, over six hundred pages, and put together in a rather haphazard fashion. It was rushed to publication shortly after Moody's death in order to get an accurate portrait on the market, as William was concerned others would either misconstrue or attempt to profit from his father's story. Although uneven, the biography contains many valuable firsthand reports of Moody's private and public life.<sup>25</sup> William revised the work, and a second edition was released in 1930. This second edition contained stylistic revisions and eliminated some of the more detailed material on Moody. The overall portrait of Moody remained essentially unchanged, however.

The second group of biographies comes from the early- to mid-twentieth century. Some of these reflected the emerging tension of the era's Fundamentalist-Modernist debate, and sought to appropriate Moody's legacy for either Fundamentalism or Modernism. Charles R. Erdman's *D. L. Moody: His Message for To-Day*, written in 1928, and Richard E. Day's 1936 book, *Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody, Commoner of Northfield*, both sought to cast Moody as a conservative. Another conservative's take on Moody was Wilbur Smith's *Annotated Biography*, published in 1948.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, Moody's younger son Paul's *My Father* aimed to show how others had misguidedly tried to tie his father to either Fundamentalism or Modernism. Paul portrayed Moody as a conservative but open-minded, magnanimous figure who rose above this sort of fray.<sup>27</sup> For Paul, his father illustrated how conservatives ought to

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<sup>25</sup> William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1900).

<sup>26</sup> Charles R. Erdman, *D. L. Moody: His Message for To-Day* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1928), 12-13; Richard E. Day, *Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody, Commoner of Northfield* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1936); Wilbur Smith, *An Annotated Bibliography of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1948).

<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere describing his father, Paul wrote, if "he were living today [1923] he would be more in sympathy with men who, like Fosdick, are preaching what he loved to spread – the love of God and the

behave. In the end, these biographies may tell us as much about their authors as their subject.

The third group of biographies appeared after 1960. These tended to be less sectarian and take more of a modern, critical approach. The first two were, *They Called Him Mr. Moody*, by Richard K. Curtis (1962),<sup>28</sup> and John Pollock's *Moody: A Biographical Portrait of the Pacesetter in Modern Mass Evangelism* (1963). Although somewhat eulogistic, these biographies used Moody's letters, papers, sermons and pamphlets, and incorporated periodicals from the time. Pollock's book has gone through several editions.<sup>29</sup> James Findlay's *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899*, published in 1969, remains the standard in critical biographies. Findlay placed Moody in the context of Revivalism and, in doing so, showed the strengths and weaknesses of both the man and the movement. Findlay raised three key issues. First, he asserted that Moody failed to reach the urban poor through revivals. This may have been a key factor in his turning away from mass evangelism to training institutions. Second, he pointed out how important technique was in understanding Moody's ministry. This was a double-edged sword; while Moody's technique produced great results and popularity among the middle and lower class, it also limited his work. This led to Findlay's third charge: Moody almost uncritically accepted "middle class values."<sup>30</sup>

Finally, the most recent biography was Lyle Dorsett's *A Passion for Souls: The Life of D. L. Moody*, released in 1997. Dorsett's was a sympathetic reading of Moody that sought to include a powerful personal spiritual dynamic as a causal factor in an academic biography. He also sought to show how Moody's work was an extension of

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power of Christ – than with those who are attempting to persecute them because they will not substitute certain shibboleths." Paul D. Moody, "Moody Becoming a Veiled Figure," *The Christian Century*, 2 (August 1923), 979.

<sup>28</sup> Richard K. Curtis, *They Called Him Mr. Moody* (New York: Doubleday, 1962).

<sup>29</sup> John Pollock, *Moody: A Biographical Portrait of the Pacesetter in Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York: Macmillan, 1963).

<sup>30</sup> James Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

his passion, and therefore not only was shaped by him, but also shaped him personally. Dorsett was candid about some of Moody's personal shortcomings, and presented a Moody who was much less a product of his times than in Findlay's portrait. Dorsett's Moody was the product of an internal spiritual dynamic, rather than a man shaped by revivalism and middle-class values. In addition to relying on secondary accounts, Dorsett read 1,800 of Moody's personal letters as well as personal diaries, pamphlets and newspaper accounts.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. Specialized Works on Moody**

Three other works, although not strictly biographical, warrant reference. Bruce Evensen's 2003 book, *God's Man for the Gilded Age*, explored Moody's relationship with the media. Evensen argued that Moody changed revivals into mass media campaigns. Evensen documented how Moody used the press to publicize his meetings. According to Evensen, Moody saw the press as a means to spread his message and worked to make sure his sermons—or extensive quotes from the Bible—were included in newspapers. As interest in Moody grew among the populace, interest in stories about his work grew as well. Thus, from the perspective of the press, by publicizing Moody, they would boost sales.

According to Evensen, Moody set a new standard for revivalism and paved the way for the later work of Billy Graham. However, Moody eventually came to understand that this use of the press came at a price: the revivals often were portrayed as a civic spectacle where he was the star of the show, an angle Moody did not seek. The value of Evensen's work is in its extensive analysis and summary of the press coverage

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<sup>31</sup> Lyle Dorsett, *A Passion for Souls: The Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997).



of Moody on both sides of the Atlantic and his chronicling of the intersection of mass media and popular religion.<sup>32</sup>

The second is a volume edited by Timothy George, *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition* (2004). The book consists of a series of essays by a number of Moody experts including Lyle Dorsett, David Bebbington, Richard T. Bewes, Thomas Corts, Lewis Drummond, Timothy George, Stanley Gundry, Donald Hustad, Don Sweeting, Derek Tidball and Warren Wiersbe. The essays examined various aspects of Moody's life and work, and each showed his impact on modern evangelicalism.<sup>33</sup>

Several of the essays are of particular significance to this thesis. Thomas Corts' essay, "D. L. Moody: Payment on Account," centred on Moody's work in the United Kingdom. Corts pointed to three distinct areas of influence. First, he noted the sheer size of the movement, pointing to attendance figures at Moody's meetings during his trips to the United Kingdom. Secondly, Corts maintained it was not just the size of Moody's meetings that was significant; it was the broad spectrum of people he reached. Corts demonstrated the diversity of Moody's appeal by looking at race, class, gender and denominations. He challenged interpretations that claimed Moody's work only impacted the middle class. Finally, Corts noted that despite Moody's enormous fame and personal relationships with so many of the leading figures in Victorian Britain, Moody remained a humble man of great personal integrity.<sup>34</sup>

Lyle Dorsett attacked the notion that Moody should be viewed solely as an evangelist in his essay, "D. L. Moody: More than an Evangelist." Dorsett argued that Moody distinguished "rescuing souls" from "nurturing and healing souls." Dorsett's point was that Moody eschewed mere conversion, and emphasized discipleship. According to Dorsett, Moody's goal was to produce spiritually healthy people who

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<sup>32</sup> Bruce Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 10-13.

<sup>33</sup> Timothy George, ed., *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> George, 9.

could evangelize and disciple others. This was why Moody replaced the “anxious bench” with the “inquiry room.” Moody emphasized personal work rather than large numbers of converts. According to Dorsett, this explains why he became involved in education and supported other work with the poor.<sup>35</sup>

In his essay, “Demythologizing Moody,” Stanley Gundry named seven “myths that have grown up around Moody” and then carefully discredited each one. Gundry disproved these seven ideas: 1) In Moody, method triumphed over message; 2) Moody’s revivalist/evangelistic methodology was in logical and historical succession from Charles Finney; 3) Moody was a Pentecostal before Pentecostalism; 4) Moody was a perfectionist and espoused second blessing theology; 5) Moody was a dispensationalist; 6) Moody rejected substitutionary atonement in favor of a moral influence view; 7) Moody was either an incipient liberal or fundamentalist. In each of these cases, Gundry demonstrated Moody had been either misunderstood or misappropriated. Further, Gundry showed that theology was important to Moody.<sup>36</sup>

The final essay of particular import in George’s volume was David Bebbington’s, “Moody as a Transatlantic Evangelical.” Bebbington presented Moody as an archetypical evangelical who was a figure of great importance on both sides of the Atlantic. Bebbington argued Moody developed a distinctive style of revivalism that focused on urban centers, integrated business methods and incorporated both lay men and women. He also argued Moody developed an unsophisticated soteriology designed to appeal to both Calvinists and Arminians and emphasized premillennialism and holiness.<sup>37</sup> Bebbington also briefly commented on Moody’s social actions. Specifically, he asserted Moody should be identified with the masses rather than the social elites and that Moody showed a concern for the welfare of people. Finally, Bebbington argued

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<sup>35</sup> Dorsett, “D. L. Moody: More than an Evangelist” in George, 31-33.

<sup>36</sup> Gundry, “Demythologizing Moody,” in George, 13-29.

<sup>37</sup> Bebbington, “Moody as a Transatlantic Evangelical,” in George, 79-85.

that the dominant view of Moody as someone who retreated from social issues in favor of evangelism is flawed.<sup>38</sup>

The final work of special interest to this study is another by Stanley Gundry, the 1976 book, *Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody*. In it, Gundry sought to explicate Moody's theology and correct some of Findlay's comments on Moody's theology. It was well documented and written, and remains the definitive study on Moody's theology. Based on a careful reading of Moody's sermons, Gundry argued persuasively Moody was a moderate Calvinist who was conservative theologically, if not terribly sophisticated and nuanced.<sup>39</sup>

### ***C. The Life of Dwight Moody***

Nothing in the early life of Dwight Lyman Moody portended his later prominence.<sup>40</sup> The son of Edwin Moody and Betsy Holton, Dwight was the sixth of nine children, seven boys and two girls. He was born on his mother's birthday, February 5, 1837, in the northern Massachusetts town of Northfield, which straddles the Connecticut River close to the New Hampshire and Vermont borders.<sup>41</sup>

Moody's father was hard working, but by some accounts a drinker and a bit of a profligate. Tragically, in 1841, he died suddenly leaving Betsy with seven children, eight months pregnant with twins, and saddled with debt. Aided by relatives and the local Unitarian minister, the family held on as best they could. Faced with severe financial straits, Betsy often sent the boys away during the winter months to live with other families. In Dwight's case, this was his lot for seven years after his father's death; many of these years were spent thirteen miles away in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 85-88.

<sup>39</sup> Stanley Gundry, *Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976).

<sup>40</sup> It is not my intention in this section to provide a biography of Moody, rather to sketch an outline of his life and ministry.

<sup>41</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 25 – 42; and Dorsett, *Passion*, 28-30.

Schooling, in this situation, became a luxury.<sup>42</sup> At best, Dwight received four years of education, attending the local school as he could between the ages of six and ten.<sup>43</sup>

At age seventeen Moody left Northfield for Boston where he worked for his uncle, Samuel Holton, in Holton's shoe store.<sup>44</sup> At his uncle's insistence, Moody attended the Mount Vernon Congregational Church in Boston. While attending Sunday School at Mount Vernon, Moody came to the attention of a middle-aged Sunday School teacher named Edwin Kimball. Under Kimball's tutelage, Moody was converted to evangelical Christianity in 1855.<sup>45</sup>

By 1856, Moody tired of Boston and headed west to the new booming metropolis on the Midwestern plains, Chicago. His newfound faith would become more evident in Chicago. Shortly after his arrival, the 1857 New York City revival made its way west to Chicago.<sup>46</sup> Moody appears to have thrown himself into the daily noon prayer meetings. He also attended the Plymouth Congregational Church. Burdened for poor children, Moody began an independent Sunday School in one of the worst areas in the city.<sup>47</sup> The school flourished, and garnered quite a reputation even beyond Chicago.<sup>48</sup>

In 1859, one of the volunteers at the Sunday School, Emma Revell, caught Moody's eye. Emma was a refined, well-educated young woman who had immigrated with her family to America from London when she was six years old. She was younger

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<sup>42</sup> Charles F. Goss, *Echoes from the Pulpit and Platform* (Hartford: A. D. Worthington, 1900), 490-495; and Dorsett, *Passion*, 34.

<sup>43</sup> There is one piece of evidence that Moody did some additional schooling later in life. Dwight Moody is listed as a student in the 1853 catalogue of the "Northfield Institute." In 1853, Moody would have been sixteen years old. The school's catalogue indicates a curriculum consisting of English, Higher English, Latin, Greek, French, Pencil Drawing, Painting and Piano. See *Third Annual Catalogue of the Instructors and Teachers of Northfield Institute, Northfield, Mass., for the Year Ending November 1853*. A copy is available in the Northfield Historical Society, Northfield, MA.

<sup>44</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 43, 44.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 43, 44, 46, 47; and William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 39-41.

<sup>46</sup> Long, *The Revival of 1857-1858*. Long's book is the definitive work on the New York revival.

<sup>47</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 110. Moody understood this and struggled to overcome the gulf between the evangelical church and the working class.

<sup>48</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 64-74.

than Dwight, but maintained a high degree of reserve and self-control. He, by comparison, was impulsive and bombastic, and he enjoyed the spotlight. As they worked together, an attraction grew, leading to their engagement shortly after Emma graduated from high school. They were married on August 28, 1862.<sup>49</sup>

As Moody's work with the Sunday School began to expand, he became involved with the Chicago YMCA. Around June of 1860, Moody left the business world and went into full-time religious work. By 1866, he had risen through the ranks of the YMCA to become its president. Under his leadership, the YMCA greatly expanded its work among Chicago's working class.<sup>50</sup> It was also through his engagement with the YMCA that Moody encountered the American Civil War.

As the war progressed, the YMCAs in the Northern states banded together to form the United States Christian Commission. The Christian Commission served the physical and spiritual needs of both Union and Confederate troops.<sup>51</sup> Moody was the first delegate sent out by the Commission. He was sent to minister to Union forces attached to General Ulysses S. Grant's command in Kentucky. On nine different occasions, he went to the front lines to minister to troops. Additionally, he ministered to southern prisoners at Camp Douglas, a prisoner of war camp just south of Chicago.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of the Civil War, Moody was increasingly in demand as a speaker. However, the stress of his lifestyle began to catch up with him. The strain of running the YMCA and the Sunday School, as well as dealing with the horror of Civil War battlefields and maintaining his role as husband, proved too much for him.<sup>53</sup> Thus, in 1867, on the advice of a doctor, Moody and his wife headed for England for a break

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<sup>49</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 56; and Dorsett, *Passion*, 68-9.

<sup>50</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 77-86.

<sup>51</sup> *Centennial Brochure* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, April 7, 2007). Elsewhere the purpose is described as seeking "the spiritual good of the soldiers... and incidentally their intellectual improvement and social and physical comfort." Lemuel Moss, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1868), 107.

<sup>52</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 82.

<sup>53</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 128, 148; and Don Sweeting, "Turning Point," in George, 41-2.

from ministry.<sup>54</sup> However, upon returning to Chicago, Moody resumed his tortuous schedule. The resolution of Moody's tension emerged from one of the greatest urban tragedies in American history, the Chicago fire of 1871.<sup>55</sup> The fire had a devastating effect on Moody. He and his family escaped personal harm, but their home was completely destroyed. His ministries suffered as well. The YMCA and the Sunday School were both destroyed.<sup>56</sup>

Consequently, Moody threw himself into fundraising. He traveled to the east coast, seeking the monies necessary to rebuild the ministries.<sup>57</sup> This was a difficult time; Moody tired of asking for funds and began to struggle internally with his sense of call. His struggle culminated in a second intense religious experience in New York in 1871. The net effect of these two events was Moody's decision to become an itinerant evangelist who focused on urban centres.<sup>58</sup>

Over the years, Moody had observed the power of music. Impressed with the musical talent of a U. S. Treasury employee named Ira Sankey, Moody began aggressively recruiting the mutton-chopped singer. By 1871, Sankey had agreed to join Moody at his work in Chicago.<sup>59</sup>

During his earlier trip to the United Kingdom, Moody had received an invitation from several prominent local clergy to return and preach a series of meetings. Consequently, Moody and Sankey determined to return to the United Kingdom in 1873. The duo was well received and their popularity increased.<sup>60</sup> Moody and Sankey remained in the United Kingdom until 1875, preaching throughout England, Scotland

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<sup>54</sup> William in his biography notes, "Mrs. Moody was at that time also suffering from asthma, and their physician had suggested that a sea voyage, with an entire change of air and scene was desirable." William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 131.

<sup>55</sup> John Pollock, *Moody Without Sankey* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 82; and Sweeting in George, 39-48. Although others have pointed out the role the Chicago fire played in Moody's life, I am particularly indebted to Sweeting's interpretation of this event.

<sup>56</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 142, 147, 148.

<sup>57</sup> D.L. Moody (letter, November 24, 1871). A copy of this letter is in the *Moodyana* collection.

<sup>58</sup> Sweeting, 39-48.

<sup>59</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 163-64, 174-75.

<sup>60</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 154-60.

and Ireland. Their tour climaxed with a four-month stay in London where approximately two and a half million people attended the meetings.<sup>61</sup>

By the time of their departure for the United States, the pair had attained celebrity status. Consequently, upon their return, invitations for citywide crusades poured in from all over America. Moody chose to start in Brooklyn on October 31, 1875. From Brooklyn, the meetings moved to Philadelphia, New York and Boston.<sup>62</sup> Finally, Moody headed west to his second home, Chicago. The Chicago crusade started October 1, 1876, in a 10,000-seat tabernacle. It would run for sixteen weeks, closing on January 16, 1877.<sup>63</sup>

In many ways, these years were the pinnacle of Moody's work as a revivalist. Most scholars agree that he would never again enjoy this degree of success.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, Moody continued working as a revivalist.<sup>65</sup> However, he branched out in other areas, especially in education. Moody's educational activity left him a lasting institutional ministry. From the late 1870s into the 1880s, he founded five schools, three in Northfield, one in Chicago, and one in Glasgow, Scotland.

In 1880, he organized the Northfield Bible Conferences in Northfield, Massachusetts, and they continued after his death, until 1902. During the years of their existence, the conferences featured some of the finest speakers from both sides of the Atlantic. In somewhat of a complementary event, Moody organized the world's first student conference, held in Northfield in 1885. These student conferences spawned the Student Volunteer Movement.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 206-7; and Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 171. The two and one-half million figure is a total number of attendees and does not allow for people who attended more than once.

<sup>62</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 195-205.

<sup>63</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 247-48.

<sup>64</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 267. Dorsett challenges this assertion, but admits he changed his focus from solely being a revivalist.

<sup>65</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 52.

<sup>66</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 54 and also William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 358.

Moody returned to the United Kingdom in September 1881, staying until the summer of 1882. He returned for a student crusade at Cambridge University in the fall of 1882, went back to America, and returned the following fall for a crusade in London from November 1883 to January 1884. Again he attracted large crowds, addressing somewhere around two million people.<sup>67</sup>

Beginning in 1884, Moody scaled back his crusades, traveling only during the months of October through April. When not out preaching, Moody spent time in Northfield, engaged in study and family time, and working with his schools. When he did venture out on revivals, Moody often concentrated on smaller cities, and limited himself to about three days in each venue.<sup>68</sup>

His final foray to the United Kingdom took place from 1891 to 1892. In addition to England and Scotland, Moody toured the continent, stopping in France and Italy. He also visited Israel, where he preached on the Mount of Olives on Easter Sunday morning.

In 1893, he had the "opportunity of the century." The World's Columbian Exposition (World's Fair) was held in Chicago from May 7 to October 31. He devised a scheme that included meetings in different languages, including 125 various Sunday services. Almost two million people signed the registries at the various meetings.<sup>69</sup>

He started his last crusade in Kansas City in November 1899. Shortly thereafter, he fell ill with a degenerative heart disease. Moody left the campaign and returned home to Northfield. He remained at Northfield until his death on December 22, 1899. The funeral was held on December 26 with C.I. Scofield, his Congregational pastor, in

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<sup>67</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 297-306. Again, this figure is total attendees and does not allow for people who attended more than once.

<sup>68</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 339, 340.

<sup>69</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 56, 57.



charge. Memorial services were subsequently held in many leading cities in the United States and Great Britain.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 556-590. William Moody's biography gives extensive coverage to the funeral and memorials.

## ***I. CRUCIAL CONTEXTS: EVANGELICALISM, URBANIZATION AND IMMIGRATION***

Personal experiences and social and historical contexts colour one's worldview. Humans cannot completely free themselves from the contexts in which they live. These contexts, in turn, shape a person's theology. This is clearly true in the case of Dwight Moody. Evangelicalism, along with urbanization and immigration, were critical in the formation of his theology. From his teenage years to the end of his life, cities and the evangelical movement would frame Moody's life and thus shape his theology.

### ***A. Evangelicalism and Revivalism: Definition and History***

No single factor had more influence on Moody than his interaction with the evangelical movement. Because of its influence on Moody, it is necessary to define exactly what evangelicalism means in this context, and to look briefly at the history of this movement, particularly in America.<sup>1</sup>

I define "evangelicalism" as the movement that finds its roots in what is referred to as the Evangelical Revival in Great Britain and the First Great Awakening in colonial America. These eighteenth-century revivals served as the springboard for a transatlantic movement that continues into the present. Dr. Timothy Larsen's recent definition of evangelicalism helps to clarify the term. Larsen has broken "evangelicalism" into five key distinctions. According to Larsen, an evangelical is:

- 1) an orthodox Protestant,
- 2) who stands in the tradition of the global Christian networks arising from the eighteenth-century revival movements associated with John Wesley and George Whitefield,

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<sup>1</sup> In the following sections, a more detailed look at specific institutions and individuals will be presented.

- 3) who has a preeminent place for the Bible in her or his Christian life as the divinely inspired, final authority in matters of faith and practice,
- 4) who stresses reconciliation with God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross,
- 5) and who stresses the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of an individual to bring about conversion and an ongoing life of fellowship with God and service to God and others, including the duty of all believers to participate in the task of proclaiming the gospel to all people.<sup>2</sup>

For this thesis, I will be using Larsen's definition.

A second term is "revivalism." In this thesis, I will be working off the following definition of revivalism.

A movement within the Christian tradition which emphasizes the appeal of religion to the emotional and affectional nature of individuals as well as to their intellectual and rational nature. It believes that vital Christianity begins with a response of the whole being to the gospel's call for repentance and spiritual

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Larsen, "Defining and Locating evangelicalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, ed. Timothy Larsen and Daniel Treier (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2007), 1-2. See also David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1-17; and Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 17-21. The popular definition proposed by David Bebbington emphasizes four key elements in evangelicalism: conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism. Although more concise than Larsen's, it lacks the geographic and chronological components found in Larsen's definition. Thus, Larsen's serves to better place evangelicalism relative to the whole Christian tradition.

rebirth by faith in Jesus Christ. This experience results in a personal relationship with God.<sup>3</sup>

Although the term can be applied to strands of Roman Catholicism, I will be using it in reference to a movement within Protestant evangelicalism.

Evangelicalism and revivalism originated in the periods of religious fervour that swept through eighteenth-century Britain. Wales, England, Scotland, Ireland and colonial America all became engulfed in waves of intense religious activity and actions. In the British Isles, these events became known as the Evangelical Revival and were tightly connected to the life and work of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield.<sup>4</sup> In the American colonies, the revival became known as the Great Awakening and was linked to the work of men like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards.

George Whitefield first met the Wesleys at Oxford in the 1730s. All three would fall under the influence of various strands of Pietism moving from the European continent to England during this time. Pietism began in seventeenth-century Germany among a group of Lutherans in response to the Thirty Years' War and what they perceived as dead orthodoxy in the state church. Led by Phillip Jakob Spener (1635-1705), and August Hermann Franke (1663-1727), Pietism emphasized practical Christian living and warm-hearted piety. The Moravian church, a branch of Pietism, played a critical role in John Wesley's conversion. Later, both of the Wesleys and George Whitefield were integral members of a new religious society formed at Oxford modelled on the *collegia pietatis* of German Pietism. Critics referred to the society

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<sup>3</sup> M. E. Dieter, "Revivalism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984) 948.

<sup>4</sup> Derek J. Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of Today's Movements* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), 12, 32-7.

variously as the Holy Club, the Bible moths, or the Methodists, with the latter term being a reference to their methodical pursuit of holiness and Bible study.

British Puritanism from the previous century also contributed to the revivals. Although the Puritan experiment had died in the United Kingdom by the time of the Wesleys and Whitefield, some of its impulses remained. In continuity with Puritan ideals, they were ardent students and teachers of the Bible. Moreover, like the Puritans they promoted experiential Christianity, asserting true Christian faith was a matter of the heart that expressed itself in holy living.

The three men would infuse these various elements into their native Anglicanism. The mixture would prove explosive both for these individuals personally and for English-speaking Protestantism. Together, the men would lead revivals and form institutions that would ultimately serve as the wellspring of evangelicalism.<sup>5</sup>

The three also brought their own unique but complementary gifts. Whitefield was arguably the finest public speaker in the English-speaking world during the eighteenth century. Charles Wesley was a gifted musician. His hymnody aroused great passion and promoted pietistic themes among the masses. John, the older brother and a gifted preacher in his own right, had tremendous organizational skills. Nowhere is this more evident than in his work with the forerunners of Methodism. Together, these three would change the face of Protestantism in the English-speaking world.

George Whitefield had the greatest effect in the American colonies. He served to link the Evangelical Revival in Britain with the First Great Awakening in America.<sup>6</sup>

Whitefield was a powerful, charismatic preacher. Trained in the theatre and having

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<sup>5</sup> Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism*. Noll demonstrates the role the Wesleys and Whitefield played in forming evangelicalism. He also carefully elucidates the role that Pietism played in the early religious life of all three.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Marty has described the American revival as "an Awakening that took many shapes, forms, expressions, and colors." Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1984), 108.

crossed eyes (he was often referred to as “Dr. Squintem” by his opponents), Whitefield brought high drama to the pulpit. The effect was electric, and he quickly drew huge crowds. Benjamin Franklin recounted hearing Whitefield preach once in Philadelphia, remarking, “I allowed two square feet for each person listening. I computed that he might well be heard by more than 30,000.”<sup>7</sup>

Moody’s work was often tied to the earlier work of Whitefield and Wesley.<sup>8</sup> Whitefield specifically raised a number of themes that would be crucial for Moody. First, he made revival a matter for the laypeople, not just the clergy. In fact, he looked to laity for leadership in revival. Second, he brought religion out of the church into the public square. Third, he emphasized the need for a “new birth” or conversion experience. Fourth, he established the role of the travelling itinerant evangelist.<sup>9</sup>

The eighteenth-century revivals also helped mitigate entrenched denominationalism and establish a nonsectarian approach to religion that would be critical to Moody’s success. One anecdote describes how Whitefield based his conception of Christian unity on the centrality of the gospel message. When asked by a Boston Anglican whether he thought the Church of England was the one true Church, Whitefield replied, “I saw regenerate souls among the Baptists, among the Presbyterians, among the Independents, and among the Church [Anglican] folks—all children of God, and yet all born again in a different way of worship: and who can tell which is the most evangelical?”<sup>10</sup> Moody would have certainly agreed with his sentiment.

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<sup>7</sup> Benjamin Franklin (Diary, 1740), quoted in Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, David F. Wells and John Woodridge, *Eerdmans’ Handbook to Christianity in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 110-11. Similar stories abound. For several examples, see Noll, *Handbook*, 105ff.

<sup>8</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 252-53. Here, William Moody cites Phillip Schaff; other such references appear throughout the book, on pages 199, 292, and 499.

<sup>9</sup> Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991). These themes are discussed in detail in this work.

<sup>10</sup> George Whitefield, *George Whitefield’s Journals* (London: Banner of Truth, 1960), 458.

Overall, the Evangelical Revival and the First Great Awakening permanently marked American revivalism and evangelicalism.<sup>11</sup> The mass meetings of Whitefield established a pattern for camp meetings and similar religious gatherings that would characterize religion in the next century.<sup>12</sup> Timothy George fittingly summarized the impact of the Great Awakening, saying, "Much of what we associate with later evangelicalism comes from this period; hymn singing, mass evangelism, the modern missionary movement, Bible Societies, Christian Social reform and so on."<sup>13</sup>

As the eighteenth century ended, American evangelicalism found itself in uncharted waters, the newly formed United States of America. Because of the Constitution's sanctioning of religious freedom and the accompanying stipulation that the federal government must not establish religion, a new model of Christianity emerged. Nathan Hatch aptly described this as a "Christianity that was reshaped by common people who molded it in their own image and who threw themselves into expanding its influence."<sup>14</sup> This not only produced a Christianity of, by and for the people, it produced remarkable diversity.<sup>15</sup> America became a land rife with all kinds of sects and denominations, each with its own distinctive set of beliefs and/or practices.<sup>16</sup> Because no religion benefited from the official sanction of the federal government, each of these various sects and denominations was by definition engaged in a competitive struggle for prominence.

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<sup>11</sup> Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 104, 132-42, 155.

<sup>12</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 50.

<sup>13</sup> Timothy George, ed. *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail: Evangelical Ecumenism and the Quest for Christian Identity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 126.

<sup>14</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, *Democratization*, 7, 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 64, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Randall Balmer and Lauren F. Winner, *Protestantism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 14.

If the eighteenth century marked the beginning of evangelicalism in America, in many ways, the nineteenth century seemed to be its apex. Indeed, every decade but two would see a significant revival.

The early revivals of the nineteenth century are often referred to collectively as the “Second Great Awakening.” One of these early bursts of revivalist activity was located in the frontier states of Kentucky and Tennessee. Presbyterians James McGready and Barton Stone worked among the frontier settlers, seeing progressive small waves of revivals. These waves culminated in the Cane Ridge revival of 1801, where somewhere between 12,000 and 25,000 people gathered at a series of camp meetings in Cane Ridge, Kentucky. The meetings were marked by fits of religious ecstasy, spontaneous singing and extended preaching by various preachers from a number of denominations. The revival continued through the Southern part of the United States for the next two years.<sup>17</sup>

These revivals established the camp meeting as a means of revival. Consequently, the camp meeting became a prevalent means of fostering revivalist fervour, especially in the western frontier and the South during the early nineteenth century. It also expanded the revivals racially, as camp meetings were particularly appealing to African Americans as well as whites.<sup>18</sup>

The West and the South were not the only regions touched by revivals in the early nineteenth-century. New England also found itself gripped by revivals. Sometimes referred to as the “New England phase” of the Second Great Awakening, this revival is generally traced to a series of sermons preached by Yale president Timothy Dwight in 1802. Most notable among Dwight’s converts were Lyman Beecher and Asahel Nettleton. Beecher would lead several significant revivals on the east coast during his

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<sup>17</sup> John Wolfe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 56 – 62.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-2.



various pastorates, while Nettleton would promote revivals on the east coast as an itinerant preacher.<sup>19</sup>

These New England awakenings lacked the raucous displays that were often part of their camp meeting counterparts. The leaders of these revivals saw themselves as the heirs of the legacy of Edwards, and they eschewed the emotionalism of the West and South in favor of a more contemplative brand of revival. Moreover, like Edwards, they developed a theological underpinning for their faith. For example, Nathaniel Taylor, another disciple of Timothy Dwight and a faculty member at Yale, sought to interpret Calvinism in a way that seemed more consistent with the realities of American life and the spirit of revivalism. Formulating what became known as “New Haven theology,” Taylor reinterpreted doctrines like original sin in a manner that emphasized human choice.<sup>20</sup> Taylor was an influential theologian who reconstituted Calvinism in accordance with nineteenth-century American culture. By doing so, Taylor provided a way forward for Calvinism in democratic America. Although Moody had no direct connection with the New Haven theology, its brand of Calvinism was much more amenable to the evangelistic methods he would employ. Consequently, it made it easier for Moody to find inroads into the Calvinist tradition.

By the mid 1820s, a third phase of the awakenings emerged. This phase found its origins in upstate New York and was associated with the work of Charles Finney. A converted lawyer, Finney underwent a dramatic conversion in 1821. By 1824, he was licensed by the Presbyterian Church and was active as an itinerant evangelist. Finney would go on to become the George Whitefield of the early nineteenth century. Like

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 66, 67.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. See also Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). This is the best analysis of Taylor. The best illustration of Taylor's enterprise is his own *CONCIO AD CLERUM: A SERMON ON HUMAN NATURE, SIN, AND FREEDOM*, delivered in chapel at Yale in 1828. Charles Hodge charged that Taylor capitulated to Arminianism.

Whitefield, he spoke to social ills, and as a dedicated postmillennialist he was optimistic about developing a kind of heaven on earth. This spawned efforts at moral reform like abolition and temperance movements. However, Finney was an evangelist at heart and evangelism was his priority. In fact, because of his insistence on the priority of evangelism, abolitionists like the Tappans ultimately shunned Finney. This foreshadowed Moody's relationship with the temperance movement in general and with Frances Willard in particular.<sup>21</sup>

Although he lacked the theological training of Whitefield, Finney made a dramatic impact on American church life. Rejecting some of the elements of Calvinism and infusing what remained with human instrumentality, Finney forged a kind of revivalism distinguished by its use of the "New Measures."<sup>22</sup> These "New Measures," taken largely from existing Methodist practice, included things like the "anxious bench" where sinners anxious about their soul would come for specific prayer and exhortation. Behind all these innovations lay Finney's assumption that revivals were in fact not miracles, but rather the product of the right use of means.

As a result, evangelicalism became increasingly practical and technique-oriented. It also flourished. Perhaps the most enduring legacy from this time period is the voluntary society. These aptly named parachurch movements often were the product of revived laypeople's social and religious concerns. Typical of these types of societies were Bible societies, temperance movements and abolitionist societies.<sup>23</sup> Large numbers of people and resources were drawn into these movements and produced a decided effect on society. Such parachurch movements, most notably the YMCA, affected

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<sup>21</sup> Charles Hambricke-Stowe, *Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 174. Elsewhere in this work, Finney is described as "... forever chary of any diversion, no matter how worthy in itself, from the work of saving souls." Hambricke-Stowe, 111.

<sup>22</sup> Keith Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); and Hambricke-Stowe. Finney's "Calvinism" is a continuing source of discussion.

<sup>23</sup> For example, The American Bible Society founded in 1816, The American Tract Society founded in 1825, The American Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1833 and The American Temperance Society founded in 1826.

Moody during the formative years of his faith. As he became a leader in the evangelical world, Moody made great use of parachurch movements during his ministry.

The Second Great Awakening also furthered the nonsectarian impulse Whitefield had expressed. Voluntary societies were nonsectarian and stressed interdenominational cooperation. These societies cultivated interdenominational collaboration and consequently helped counterbalance the centrifugal forces started by the Constitution. They also spawned a kind of evangelical ecumenism that was transatlantic in scope. The best illustration of this was the Evangelical Alliance, a nonsectarian organization designed to promote unity among Protestants and to counteract Romanism. In 1846, over eight hundred participants from both sides of the Atlantic gathered at the Alliance's initial meeting in London. The Alliance established nine distinct doctrinal assertions as the basis for its union. Two of these became central tenets of Moody's personal doctrine: the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and justification by faith and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup>

However, things were not as rosy as they seemed for evangelicals. As the century progressed, the movement was faced with four distinct threats that together brought an end to evangelical hegemony and ultimately split the movement:<sup>25</sup> 1) urbanization and (2) resultant Roman Catholic immigration, (3) slavery and the Civil War, and (4) the emergence of new theologies, some from within America, and others imported from Europe and Great Britain. The latter portion of this chapter includes an extended section on the first two of these threats, so let us turn briefly to the last two issues.

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<sup>24</sup> Bebbington, *Dominance*, 21-3. See also J. B. A. Kessler, *A Study of the Evangelical Alliance in Great Britain* (Goes, Netherlands: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1968), 31.

<sup>25</sup> Mark Noll, *The Work We Have To Do: A History of Protestants in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 76-96. Certainly, other factors go into the destruction of evangelical Protestant hegemony and its ultimate splintering. However, these are the major causes. For a more nuanced and detailed study, see Martin E. Marty, *Righteous Empire: the Protestant Experience in America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970). See especially chapters 10-20.

In many ways, the American Civil War became the defining moment in the life of the United States. Driven by the issue of slavery, the war was a deeply contentious and costly affair.<sup>26</sup> In many homes, it pitted brother against brother. This was true even in the home of the First Family, as several members of Abraham Lincoln's family by marriage served in the Confederate armed forces.

It is hardly surprising that the Civil War devastated the large Protestant denominations as well. Like the nation as a whole, the large Protestant churches were bitterly divided by the issue of slavery. In an ominous sign of what was to come for the nation, the slavery question divided the Presbyterians in 1838, the Methodists in 1844, and the Baptists in 1845.<sup>27</sup> The war embittered the factions, further isolating the divided churches.

Compounding these threats, evangelical Protestants began a long bitter internal debate about how to respond to the new theology or liberalism. Grant Wacker points out:

Typically, the new theology has been pictured as the creation of a small number of well-educated and extremely talented ministers and seminary professors who lived, for the most part, in or near New England and who did their most creative work during the sunset of the nineteenth century... In the most recent studies, however, the new theology's debt to Roman Catholic as well as

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<sup>26</sup> John Patrick Day, *When Slavery Was Called Freedom: Evangelicalism, Proslavery and the Causes of the Civil War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002). This is the best study on this subject of which I am aware. In the work, Day examines the debates concerning slavery that consumed antebellum America. Both sides appealed to the power of God to prove them victorious and, above all, morally superior. See also Harry Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Penguin, 2006). Echoing Day, Stout contends the ferocity and length of the American Civil War can only be explained by both sides' claims that they had God on their side.

<sup>27</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 659-65.

Protestant thinking in Britain, France, and Germany has been underscored.<sup>28</sup>

Germany was particularly crucial as this new theology or modernism, as it is sometimes called, found its origin in four streams of thought: German higher criticism, the writings of Friedrich E. D. Schleiermacher, Hegelian idealism, and Albrecht Ritschl's work.

Initially, the impact of new ideas was greatest in Germany. However, by the mid to late nineteenth-century many similar ideas were being espoused by English-speaking theologians. Specifically, men like W. Robertson Smith (b.1846), George Adam Smith (b. 1856), Henry Preserved Smith (b.1847), Charles Augustus Briggs (b. 1841), William Rainey Harper (b. 1856) and Shailer Mathews (b. 1863) articulated versions of these new ideas. Although these new theologies were not part of Moody's formative years, they would emerge during his later years in ministry. Sweeping through evangelicalism during the late nineteenth century, the new theology eventually generated heated debates and in the early twentieth century caused a series of heresy trials and denominational schisms.<sup>29</sup>

However, some of the new theological ideas had their origins in the United States. Horace Bushnell, a Congregationalist (1802-1876), was a key figure in the development of romantic liberalism.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes referred to as "progressive religion," the movement drew from the transcendental Unitarianism of the early nineteenth

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<sup>28</sup> Grant Wacker, "The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880 – 1910," *The Journal of American History* 72, No. 1 (June 1985): 49.

<sup>29</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 390. The Presbyterians were struggling with heresy trial as early as 1883. In the United States, the Baptists and the Presbyterians split in the early twentieth-century, specifically the Baptist Bible Union in 1923 – many later formed the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches in 1932, and the Conservative Baptists formed in 1947. Two groups split out of the Presbyterian Church in 1936: the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Bible Presbyterian Church. These new denominations quickly formed their own seminaries as well. They were Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary, Grand Rapids Baptists Seminary and Westminster Seminary.

<sup>30</sup> See for example Bushnell's *Christian Nurture* (1847), *God in Christ* (1849), *Nature and the Supernatural* (1858), and *Vicarious Sacrifice* (1866).

century. Paralleling Ritschl, its advocates argued for an intuitive reception of religion that extracted religious assertions from the arena of scientific verification.<sup>31</sup>

On top of these theological undercurrents, Charles Darwin's groundbreaking work *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859) created another cause for dissent among evangelicals. Some saw Darwin's theory as challenging the veracity of the Genesis account of creation. However, other evangelicals sought to synthesize the two, arguing that they were not *de facto* incompatible.<sup>32</sup>

In essence then, three distinct strands were emerging within evangelicalism during the nineteenth century. First was an historic orthodoxy that reflected the basic assertions of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. Second was the Romantic strain championed by Bushnell. Third was a scientific modernism proposed by people like William Rainey Harper (1856–1906). All three strands surrounded Moody during his career.<sup>33</sup> It is important to note that these strands shared common concerns and often cooperated in various religious endeavours. Moody's revivals and the Northfield conferences are two outstanding examples.<sup>34</sup>

This was the evangelicalism of Dwight Moody. It was the heir of the Evangelical Revival in Britain and the Great Awakening in America. It was shaped by democracy and an emphasis on the practical that emerged during the Second Great Awakening. It contained independent strands woven together by nonsectarian societies. Its engine was the mass revival, increasingly fuelled by personal conversions and driven by laypeople. As Moody's career ended, evangelicalism's hegemony in America had

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<sup>31</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 60.

<sup>32</sup> One of the leading proponents of the synthesis approach was Moody's disciple Henry Drummond.

<sup>33</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 55-61. Gundry provides a more complete summary.

<sup>34</sup> Grant Wacker, "Spirit of the Age," 45- 48. As the century progressed, the tensions increased, leading to open hostility by the second and third decade of the twentieth century. See Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*.

already begun to waste away.<sup>35</sup> Buffeted externally and stressed internally, the American evangelical movement moved toward the twentieth century seeking fidelity with its past while struggling to adapt to the issues of modern life.

### **B. Urbanization and Immigration**

*The city is the nerve center of our civilization. It is also the storm center... Here is heaped the social dynamite; here roughs, gamblers, thieves, robbers, lawless and desperate men of all sorts, congregate; men who are ready on any pretext to raise riots for the purpose of destruction and plunder; here gather foreigners and wage-workers; here skepticism and irreligion abound; here inequality is the greatest and most obvious, and the contrast between opulence and penury the most striking; here is suffering the sorest. As the greatest wickedness in the world is to be found not among the cannibals of some far off coast, but in Christian lands where the light of truth is diffused and rejected, so the utmost depth of wretchedness exists not among savages, who have few wants, but in great cities, where, in the presence of plenty and of every luxury men starve....*

—Josiah Strong<sup>36</sup>

*Water runs down hill, and the highest hills are the great cities. If we can stir them, we can stir the whole nation*

—Dwight Moody, 1876<sup>37</sup>

Although he was a child of rural western Massachusetts, Dwight Moody's adult life was defined by cities. As a young man, he was drawn to cities by the twin prospects

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<sup>35</sup> Bebbington, *Dominance*, 75.

<sup>36</sup> Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, rev. ed. (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1891), 171.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 263.

of opportunity and excitement. As he matured, Moody remained attracted to cities, this time for strategic reasons. Moody, like many Protestants, came to see the cities as containing both the greatest opportunity to build up Christian civilization, as well as the greatest threat to tear it down. It is significant that, as much as Moody deeply loved Northfield, he lived in the city nine months of the year on average.<sup>38</sup> Undoubtedly, the city shaped Moody. There is also no question that the various urban ills he observed would be integral to his theological formation.

During the nineteenth century, America was transformed from an agrarian society to an urban, industrialized society. Although this shift had begun before the Civil War, the War itself expedited the trend. Between 1860 and 1920, the number of people living in American cities of 8,000 or more inhabitants jumped from 6.2 million (19.7%) to 54.3 million (58.9%).<sup>39</sup> Three east coast cities in particular served to illustrate the trend. Between 1860 and 1890, Boston grew from 177,840 residents to 560,892; Philadelphia from a population of 565,529 to 1,293,697; and New York from 1,080,330 to 3,437,202 citizens.<sup>40</sup> However, even this spectacular growth was dwarfed by Moody's adopted home, the sprawling behemoth on the Midwestern prairie, Chicago. First incorporated in the marshes at the edge of Lake Michigan in 1833, Chicago had grown from a mere seventeen buildings in 1833, to a population of 1,698,575 by 1900, making it the fifth largest city in the world. Even more remarkably, the city achieved this growth despite having suffered a devastating fire in 1871.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 260.

<sup>39</sup> Howard P. Chudacoff and Judith E. Smith, *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000), 188. The percentages were determined by taking the number of city inhabitants and dividing them by the total population of the United States. The population figures were taken from the United States census figures of 1860 and 1910, respectively. The numbers from 1860 include the slave population.

<sup>40</sup> Sydney E. Alhstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1974), 735.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



Many of these new inhabitants were immigrants. Between 1860 and 1920, close to 28,500,000 foreigners entered the American work force; this number almost equalled the total population of the country in 1850. From 1860 to 1900, the period of Moody's work, 14 million immigrants arrived.<sup>42</sup> By 1900, fully two-thirds of the urban population was foreign-born.<sup>43</sup> They were a mixture of Roman Catholics and Protestants from Europe, Jews from Europe, and Chinese. Some were fleeing difficulties in their homeland, others seeking new opportunities their homelands did not afford.

The largest group of immigrants was Roman Catholic. The rise of the Roman Catholic population during the nineteenth century was meteoric. In 1820, Roman Catholics comprised less than 1% of the population; by 1830, 3.8%; by 1840, 5.8%; and by 1850, 12.5%.<sup>44</sup> Sydney Ahlstrom observes that, "During the first half of the nineteenth century the Roman Catholic Church in the United States ceased to be a persecuted, numerically insignificant body and became the largest church in the country."<sup>45</sup> This trend would continue throughout the nineteenth century. By 1870, 40% of all churchgoers were Roman Catholics.<sup>46</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 1875, the Vatican appointed the first American Cardinal.

Native-born people, who flocked to the city from the countryside, joined the immigrants.<sup>47</sup> Moody was typical of this group. Drawn by the opportunities of the newly emerging cities, many young men and women left the farm and struck out for the city. Not surprisingly, overcrowding, low economic standards, and illiteracy gripped urban areas. With the rise of industrialization and the massive influx of immigrant

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> Harold U. Faulkner, *American Economic History*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1960), 473-475.

<sup>44</sup> Chester Gillis, *Roman Catholicism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 60-1.

<sup>45</sup> Ahlstrom, 555.

<sup>46</sup> Chudacoff and Smith, 122.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 120-21. These pages detail the movement of rural native-born Americans to the new urban centers.

workers, class wars erupted. The country was rocked by riots, boycotts and strikes.<sup>48</sup>

These traumas produced exceedingly complex problems that were economic, social, moral, and religious in nature.

America was hardly alone in its turmoil. The story in the United Kingdom was similar, producing ills similar to those besetting the United States. As the Industrial Revolution gathered steam in the nineteenth century, migration of the population from country to city in Great Britain increased dramatically. In fact, Victorian Britain experienced the most rapid and thorough urbanization the world had yet seen.<sup>49</sup> People flocked from the countryside to the cities to such an extent that, by mid-century, Great Britain had become the first predominantly urban society in history. This is demonstrated by the *1851 Census of the Population of England and Wales*. The Census revealed that for the first time in the history of any significant nation, more people lived in towns than in rural areas. In fact, it has been estimated that from 1841 to 1901, the rural areas of England and Wales lost more than 4 million people due to internal migration. Of these, 3 million headed for the towns, at a rate of more than half a million per decade.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, by 1881, 50 % of Britain's populace lived in cities of 20,000 or more. By 1891, fully 72% of the population of England and Wales was categorized as urban. From 1801 to 1911, the urban population increased nearly by a factor of ten, from 3.5 to 32 million, leading Bédarida to describe this phenomena as "Galloping urbanization."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Chartier, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Jason Long, "Rural-Urban Migration and Socioeconomic Mobility in Victorian Britain" in *The Journal of Economic History*, 65, No. 1 (March 2005), 1-5; and Ibid., "Urbanization, Internal Migration and Occupational Mobility in Victorian Britain" (unpublished article, November 2001), 1-3. I am indebted to Jason Long for this material.

<sup>50</sup> Francois M. Crouzet, *The Victorian Economy*, trans. A.S. Forster (London: Methuen, 1982), 93. Of the remaining million, 500,000 headed to mining towns, while the rest headed overseas.

<sup>51</sup> F. A Bédarida, *Social History of England, 1851-1975*, trans. A.S. Forster (London: Methuen, 1979), 32.

The result of this movement was the development of horrifying slums and cramped row housing in the overcrowded cities. As the century progressed and public transportation became available, the cities were 'organized' into geographical zones based on social class - the poor in the inner city, with the more fortunate living further away from the city core.

London provides a graphic example of this trend in urban growth. The population of the city in 1809 was a little over 1 million. By 1850 it was 2.3 million, and by 1901, it was 4.14 million, with greater London reaching a population of over 6 million. During this time, London grew faster than any other city in Europe.<sup>52</sup>

Transportation played a critical role in London's growth and in its population patterns. As the nineteenth century ended, the city featured numerous modes of transportation. The Underground had opened in the 1860s. Horse-drawn trams and buses moved throughout the city, and trains ran spurs out to the newly formed suburban regions. These suburban trains would hasten the formation of urban slums, isolated from the middle and upper classes. The trains would shape both the economy and culture of London.<sup>53</sup> As one scholar put it, "Once population expansion and the railroads united, the Georgian city yielded to the Victorian city, the cream-colored stucco of the last years of aristocratic London was replaced by the blackened bricks of the industrial age; and, finally, leisured urbanity was supplanted by the modern culture of timetables."<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, as might be expected, London suffered through the inevitable rash of social ills that accompanied urban growth in the nineteenth century. Poor and overcrowded housing and foul air became increasingly symptomatic of sections of the

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<sup>52</sup> Roy Porter, *London: A Social History*, (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 226, 248-49. See also [http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/london\\_19c.html](http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/london_19c.html) (accessed August 30, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 271-284.

<sup>54</sup> Shelton Rothblatt, "Nineteenth-Century London," *People and Communities in the Western World*, ed. Gene Bruckner. (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1979), 2: 186.

city. Poor sanitation brought waves of epidemic to the poor sections. The city struggled with prostitution, crime, drunkenness and masses of abused and uneducated children. It is hardly surprising London spawned the Salvation Army, formed by William Booth in 1865 to combat its evils.<sup>55</sup> Booth was not alone. Spurgeon, Hog, and Shaftesbury, to name a few, also sought to address London's ills. Moody found support among men like these throughout his career.

London was not the only place in the United Kingdom that experienced urbanization. Cities in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Northern England experienced the same phenomena. In the late nineteenth-century, Belfast was the United Kingdom's fastest growing city and Glasgow was the fastest growing in Great Britain.<sup>56</sup> In 1800, less than one Scot in five lived in towns of more than 10,000. By 1850, it was one in three, and by 1900, one in two. Glasgow typified this growth during the nineteenth century, swelling from 147,000 in 1820 to 762,000 in 1900.

The majority of this growth can be attributed to immigration. Immigration in Glasgow can be roughly divided into two periods, the first until 1850 and the second from 1850 until the end of the century. Irish Catholics made up most of this new urban population during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1805, the lone Catholic priest in Glasgow reported there were only 450 parishioners in the city. By 1851, the number of Catholics in Glasgow had grown to 18.2% of the population, compared to a total of only 7.2% for all of Scotland. Most of the Irish were unskilled labourers who

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<sup>55</sup> Porter, *London*, 364

<sup>56</sup> For a look at Belfast, see Estyn Evans and Emrys Jones, "The Growth of Belfast" in *The Town Planning Review*, 26, No. 2 (July 1955), 92-111. For accounts of the industrial revolution in Scotland, see R.H. Campbell, *Scotland Since 1707: The Rise of an Industrial Society* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1965), and *The Rise and Fall of Scottish Industry 1707-1939* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1980); Anthony Slaven, *The Development of the West of Scotland 1750-1960*, (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975); S. G. E. Lythe and J. Butt, *An Economic History of Scotland, 1100-1939*, (Glasgow: Blackie, 1975); B. Lenman, *An Economic History of Modern Scotland 1660-1976* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1977); and C.H. Lee, "Modern Economic Growth and Structural Change in Scotland: the Service Sector Reconsidered," *Scottish Economic and Social History* 3. No. 3 (1983), 115-35, which provides a critique of these and other approaches to Scottish economic growth.

worked in the textile industry, many in cotton factories or weaving sheds. They congregated in inner-city ghettos where they were plagued by waves of typhus and cholera and often faced the scorn of the protestant elites.<sup>57</sup>

After the 1850s, the situation changed. Immigration continued to grow cities, but this time the immigrants were Irish Protestants, and the industry was different. In the second half of the nineteenth century, heavy industries like iron, shipbuilding, marine engineering and steel, rather than textiles, increasingly drove the development of Scottish cities.

By the time Moody first arrived there in the 1870s, Glasgow's population struggled with substandard and insufficient housing, intermittent waves of disease, increasing tensions between native and immigrant Protestants and immigrant Catholics, poverty, drunkenness, domestic violence and labour unrest.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, like their American cousins, Britain faced a myriad of interrelated social, economic and religious questions.

### **C. Conclusion**

Dwight Moody was an evangelical. It was the intellectual and religious context of his life. Although not born in the movement, as Moody came of age, it became his world. He would be pushed and pulled by the various trends that surged through the movement during his life, and by the time of his death, he would be the author of some of those trends.

Geographically, Moody's context was the city. The cities of the United States and the United Kingdom were Moody's parish. These cities, saturated with immigrants, racked with poverty, plagued by labor unrest and religious tension and scarred by

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<sup>57</sup> Thomas Gallagher, *Glasgow, the Uneasy Peace: Religious Tension in Modern Scotland, 1819-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 11-12. Gallagher cites the responses of Matthew Arnold and Thomas Carlyle to the Irish as typical.

<sup>58</sup> Sean Damer, *Glasgow: Going for a Song* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 71-103; 107-136.

slums, dominated Moody's adult life. If his theology emerged from the soil of evangelicalism, it was in the cities he sought to plant it. His life was given to bringing evangelical Christianity to bear on these "nerve centers of our civilization."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Josiah Strong. *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, rev. ed. (New York: Baker and Taylor Company, 1891), 171.

## **II. THE FORMATION OF MOODY'S THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL VISION:**

### **TO THE CIVIL WAR**

*"I am not a graduate of any college or theological seminary, and so I have asked you here to get all I can out of you, for use in my work."*<sup>1</sup>

—D. L. Moody

In the previous chapter, I sought to set Moody in the context of evangelicalism, urbanization and immigration, the key trends and movements that surrounded him. The next two chapters will provide a more detailed look at the people and events that intersected with Moody's life up to the time of his first campaign in the United Kingdom in 1873. This chapter will focus on Moody's life until the outbreak of the American Civil War. However, in some cases, it may follow some influences into the years after the War. Consequently, the chapter is limited to those people and movements that first came into Moody's life before the war. The concern throughout will be to identify various threads that fed the formation of Moody's theology.

As previously noted, Moody was not well educated. What is more, he was an active personality who rarely engaged in speculative thought. Moody's genius was as an organizer, motivator, and innovator. Consequently, Moody's theology is not the product of the lecture hall or extensive reading of theological works.

Moody acquired a substantial library during the course of his life, mostly through the gifts of friends and admirers. The library was housed in the study of his home in Northfield. Unfortunately, the library has long since been sold or removed in parts and is not traceable. There are some conflicting reports about Moody's reading

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<sup>1</sup> John V. Farwell, *The early Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d.), 56.

habits. While there is no debate that he read very little in his early life, his son William claimed that after 1876, Moody embarked on a more regular pattern of reading.<sup>2</sup> Recently, Dorsett has made similar claims, pointing to Moody's reference to reading a biography of Napoleon.<sup>3</sup> However, Paul Moody claimed not to remember his father reading in his later years.<sup>4</sup> Paul's recollection is confirmed by Moody's friend, W. H. Daniels, who noted Moody was probably only familiar with about a half-dozen of the books in his library.<sup>5</sup> Further, there is virtually no reference to other books in his letters or sermons. Probably, therefore, Gundry is right that any later reading was done for sermon material and likely had little effect on Moody's theology.<sup>6</sup> Apparently, the bulk of his theology was in place before his 1873 trip to the United Kingdom.

When Moody did read, he almost exclusively read the Bible. Addressing a group of new converts in 1876, Moody said, "I have one rule about books, I do not read any book unless it will help me understand the book... It is a great pleasure to get a book that helps unfold the blessed Bible."<sup>7</sup> Beside the Bible, Moody's reading was largely confined to books like *Cruden's Concordance*, C. H. Mackintosh's notes on the Bible or Charles Spurgeon's works.

Two factors beyond education limited Moody's reading. First, his temperament was kinetic, always restless and moving. Spending hours in libraries engaging with theological texts was not Moody's forte. Second, though less important, was his brutal schedule. As we shall see from various correspondences, Moody was always busy. His

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<sup>2</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 303.

<sup>3</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 327.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Moody, *My Father*, 114.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Gundry, 43.

<sup>6</sup> Gundry, 43-4. The possible exception to this is the works of Spurgeon and the commentaries of C. H. Mackintosh. Later in the chapter, we will note Moody's self-attested debt to these two sources. It is clear they both played a role in forming his theology.

<sup>7</sup> Dwight Moody, *Glad Tidings: Comprising Sermons and Prayer Meeting Talks Delivered at the New York Hippodrome* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1876), 452.



travel schedule exhausted him, leaving little time for activities other than Bible reading, sermon preparation and letter writing.<sup>8</sup>

Moody did recognize his lack of education, however, and pursued knowledge in a way that fitted his gifts and personality. First, he was a voracious note taker. Moody often carried a notebook, taking notes during sermons and lectures. He took the notebooks home and placed them in large linen envelopes organized by topic. Moody carried the envelopes along when he travelled and would bring out the appropriate one before an address, searching through the whole of its contents. Moody would then select a few of the items and insert them in the appropriate places in his sermon. In addition, he included a few new thoughts or illustrations. Consequently, no two sermons were ever the same.<sup>9</sup>

Moody also learned by conversing with the educated people of his day. He often formed “impromptu bull sessions whenever he found himself among persons, especially ministers, from whom he thought he could learn.”<sup>10</sup> Moody became famous for peppering friends and guests with all kinds of questions about the Bible at every possible occasion. In fact, the famous Northfield Conferences were organized partly for his own benefit, so that he could absorb the teaching of the eminent preachers of the day.<sup>11</sup> As Bebbington notes, “He was therefore shaped by contemporary currents of opinion, not by longstanding traditions.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, personal interaction and personal experience inordinately influenced Moody.

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<sup>8</sup> Walter Osborn, “D. L. Moody’s Travels” (revised 1991), Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>9</sup> David Bebbington, “Moody as a Transatlantic Evangelical” (unpublished paper, November 2004), 16; and Henry Drummond, *Dwight L. Moody: Impressions and Facts* (New York: McClure, Philips, 1900), 70.

<sup>10</sup> Gundry, 41. Gundry makes the point that Moody’s primary source of education was talking and note taking.

<sup>11</sup> *D.L. Moody at Home* (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), 31.

<sup>12</sup> Bebbington, “Transatlantic Evangelical”, 10.

Therefore, Moody's theological convictions were the product of three distinct factors. First, his theology reflected his own life experience. Second, his theology was shaped by what he observed in his environment. Third, his theology was impacted by personal relationships with people he valued and admired. In short, most of Moody's theology was caught, not taught. However, this should not imply that Moody was merely a passive receptor. In fact, Moody actively synthesized these three sets of influences into a distinct set of personal convictions. Nevertheless, because of the contemporary nature of his sources, Moody's views reflected some of the ambiguity of the era.

This chapter will explore the movements and people who influenced the development of Moody's theology before the American Civil War. Moody almost never discussed how he came to his conclusions. Therefore, the next two chapters infer from careful study of persons, institutions and environments which key elements likely shaped Moody's theology.

### ***A. Childhood in Massachusetts***

Moody's birthplace, Northfield, Massachusetts, traced its religious roots back to early Puritan days. In the early eighteenth-century, the town was affected by the revival work of Jonathan Edwards at nearby Northampton, Massachusetts. However, by the early nineteenth century, Congregationalism, the established religion of the state, had splintered and a fledgling Unitarian movement had emerged. Northfield's First Parish Church identified with the Unitarians in 1827.<sup>13</sup>

As a direct result of the death of Moody's father in 1841, the family was brought into contact with the local Unitarian Church and its pastor, the Reverend Oliver Everett. In William Moody's biography of his father, he describes Everett as visiting "the

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<sup>13</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 27-29; Bebbington, "Moody as Transatlantic Evangelical" (unpublished paper, November 2004) 2.

destitute family and [helping] them both by counsel and material assistance.”<sup>14</sup>

The Reverend Everett and the First Parish of Northfield, Unitarian, would have a lingering effect on the life of Dwight Moody.<sup>15</sup>

Oliver Capon Everett came to Northfield at the age of 25, relatively fresh from seminary.<sup>16</sup> He was descended from a prominent Massachusetts family. His uncle, Edward, served as president of Harvard University, Congressman and Senator and as governor of Massachusetts. Edward also delivered the less famous of the two speeches at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg in 1863.<sup>17</sup> Although not nearly as prominent as Edward, Oliver’s father, Otis, had made a name for himself by amassing a fortune as a merchant in Boston.<sup>18</sup>

Growing up in Boston, Oliver Everett had excelled in school. He went on to graduate from Harvard in 1832, and then from the Divinity School at Harvard in 1836. Everett formally took over the reins of the First Unitarian Congregational Church from the Reverend George Washington Hosmer in March 1837 after Hosmer left to become the pastor of the new Unitarian Church in Buffalo, New York.<sup>19</sup>

Everett’s theological convictions are a bit uncertain. One source describes him as “liberal in doctrine and imbued with the teaching of Christ.”<sup>20</sup> Later in life, Moody is purported to have called him “*the* true shepherd of God.”<sup>21</sup> As we shall see, the First Church of Northfield had split into distinct Unitarian and Trinitarian Congregations, which indicates Everett’s commitment to Unitarianism. Nevertheless, this Unitarianism seems a bit dubious. In William Moody’s biography, he asserts that the whole family

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<sup>14</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 21.

<sup>15</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 4-5, 21. William points out the very important role Everett played in the life of the Moody family.

<sup>16</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 32. It should be noted that Dorsett is wrong in his portrayal of Everett as “old” and “aged.”

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/HVDpresidents/everett.php> (accessed July 7, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Edward Franklin Everett, *Descendants of Richard Everett of Dedham, Massachusetts* (Boston: Privately Printed, 1902), 104.

<sup>19</sup> Everett, 190.

<sup>20</sup> Powell manuscript in Northfield archives, nd., 96.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

was baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>22</sup>

Dorsett also points out that Moody’s friend, W. H. Daniels, corroborates the story and supports William Moody’s claim that Everett was in fact an orthodox Christian. Daniels maintains that at that time Unitarianism was fluid and not as consistently non-Trinitarian as it was later in the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

Daniels’ assertion is correct. From 1800 to 1835, Unitarianism was in a formative stage. Mainly influenced by English philosophy, it was semi-supernatural, imperfectly rationalistic and devoted to philanthropy and practical Christianity. Probably the most influential figure in this stage of its development was William Ellery Channing. Channing (1780–1842) was installed in the Federal Street Congregational Church, Boston, in 1803. Although reared in strict Calvinism, Channing increasingly questioned its basic tenets. Channing made a public break with traditional orthodoxy in an ordination sermon he delivered in Baltimore in 1819. In the sermon, Channing questioned the doctrine of the Trinity and severely moderated the concept of the deity of Christ. In addition, he questioned the doctrines of human depravity and substitutionary atonement. However, throughout his career, Channing maintained a belief in the resurrection and in the genuineness of the miracles in the New Testament. Most importantly, he emphasized the love of God and Christian philanthropy.

Channing popularized this fledgling Unitarianism, and it began to hold sway at Harvard College during Oliver Everett’s student days. It had also made its way out to Northfield before Everett arrived. Samuel C. Allen served the First Church in Northfield from 1795 until 1798. Allen, a 1794 graduate of Dartmouth, was “considered orthodox”

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Dorsett, *Passion*, 30.

<sup>23</sup> A similar incident from the life of Phillips Brooks supports this interpretation. In a letter dated November 22, 1927, a Rev. William Lawrence writes to William Moody in response to William’s question about Phillips Brooks and baptism. He confirms Brooks was baptized as an infant by a Unitarian in name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Brooks maintained, “In his judgment and knowledge his baptism was valid.” Moody Bible Institute Archives.

when he arrived in Northfield, "but he afterwards became a Unitarian."<sup>24</sup> Allen was followed by Thomas Mason, a graduate of Harvard College and the Divinity School. Mason would serve from 1799 to 1830. Deeply influenced by Channing, and described as "liberal minded," Mason took the First Church into the Unitarian denomination in 1827.<sup>25</sup> In response, a number of the members withdrew from its communion in 1827, and formed the First Trinitarian Congregational Church in 1829. George Washington Hosmer then led the First Unitarian Church from 1830 until Everett's arrival in 1836. Everett was formally installed as pastor of the First Church in 1837.

Whatever the exact nature of his theological convictions, Everett clearly was committed to the vision of a loving God and Christian philanthropy. Everett impressed Moody with the kindness he directed towards the family. After the death of Moody's father, Everett became actively involved in the life of the family.<sup>26</sup> He encouraged Betsy "not to part with the children but keep them together as best she could, to trust God and to bring them up for him."<sup>27</sup> He helped Betsy keep the family together by giving them food. He also intervened by taking the young Moody into his home until his transfer to another parish in 1848. There is one piece of evidence of Everett's continued interest in Moody after leaving Northfield. An 1853 catalogue of the "Northfield Institute" lists Dwight Moody as a student. The back of the catalogue lists Everett as a "reference." Given the family's difficult financial situation, it is most likely

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<sup>24</sup> Powell manuscript in the Northfield archives, nd., 48.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>26</sup> William H. Daniels, in 1877 account of Moody's work, described Everett in the following manner: "This man was a faithful friend to the widow and her large family of little children. He would visit them betimes, cheer them up with some pleasant words, settle quarrels among the boys, give the little ones a bright piece of silver all around, and bid the mother to keep on praying; telling her God would never forget her labor of love. One time he took little Dwight into his family to do errands and go to school – a work of charity, which by all accounts must have sorely tried his patience. The good man was often perplexed what to do with the boy, being forced to laugh at his pranks in spite of himself, when he felt his duty to be stern and severe." W. H. Daniels, *Moody: His Words, Work, and Workers* (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1877), 12.

<sup>27</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 4-5.

Everett paid Moody's tuition.<sup>28</sup> Everett introduced the family to a kind, compassionate God who loved people. The death of Edwin Moody made a strong impression on the young boy Dwight.<sup>29</sup> It makes sense he was equally impressed by the Christian charity of the young minister who no doubt taught the young Moody repeatedly that God loved him. It is hardly coincidental that this early lesson became a dominant theme in Moody's later preaching.<sup>30</sup>

Everett's influence on Moody was not a result of his preaching. As a boy, Moody seems to have endured religion, rather than embracing it. Moody recalled that he detested Sundays. He claimed sermons bored him, and he actively tried to avoid going to church. He did pray, but these prayers were matters of expediency rather than conviction.<sup>31</sup> Despite this indifference to organized religion, Everett had an impact on the young lad.

It is true that later Moody distanced himself from Unitarianism. However, some of this was the result of later developments within the denomination. Further, Moody did not derive his doctrine primarily from theology texts; he got it from the Bible and his own life experience. Largely because of Everett, his mother remained Unitarian after

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<sup>28</sup> *Third Annual Catalogue of the Instructors and Teachers of Northfield Institute, Northfield, Mass., for the Year Ending November 1853*, Northfield Historical Society, Northfield, MA.

<sup>29</sup> Moody admits as much in his sermon on the Prodigal Son: "The first thing I remember was the death of my father. It was a beautiful day in June when he fell suddenly dead. The shock made such an impression on me, young as I was, that I shall never forget it. I remember nothing about the funeral, but his death has made a lasting impression upon me." M. Laird Simons, *Holding the Fort: comprising sermons and addresses at the Great Revival Meetings conducted by Moody and Sankey* (Philadelphia: Quaker City Publishing, 1877), 198-99.

<sup>30</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 30-2; Arthur J. Fry, *D. L. Moody: The Formative Years* (Chicago: No publisher given, 1995), 13-15. Dorsett notes that Everett's approach stood in stark contrast to the Calvinism in which Betsy was reared. She was particularly put off by the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination. Against this backdrop, Everett's emphasis on God's love and compassion seemed appealing and refreshing to Betsy. It is apparent that it appealed to her son as well. Throughout his career, Moody remained aloof from some of the articles of Calvinism. An episode from early in Moody's career is illustrative. As the Illinois Street Independent Church was being formulated, Moody was involved in formulating its doctrinal statement. The statement seems to parallel the statement for the Congregationalist church. There is one significant difference however. The committee forming the statement omitted the clause on predestination, largely at Moody's urging. However, this does not mean that Moody totally rejected Calvinism, simply that he was not a thorough-going consistent Calvinist like Spurgeon.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Gamaliel Bradford, *D. L. Moody: A Worker in Souls* (Chicago: George H. Doran, 1927), 22-3. For example, Moody tells of praying to God for help moving a heavy rail.

Dwight left Northfield. Moody admired his mother. Emma acknowledged this in a letter she wrote to Mrs. Moody in the early 1860s.

I thought also that you might have thought that because Mr. Moody was of a different denomination to what I had been trained in youth that his love and respect for his mother had abated, but I know such is not the case. Besides some of Mr. Moody's warmest friends are Unitarian.<sup>32</sup>

As Moody matured in his faith and distanced himself from the family's Unitarian roots, there would be times of tension, as the above letter implies. Nevertheless, while Moody came to reject much later Unitarian doctrine, it seems difficult to believe the practical example of Everett was so easily jettisoned.<sup>33</sup> By taking Moody into his own home and securing what education he could for the lad, Everett functioned as more than merely a minister to the young Dwight Moody. In fact, Everett and the First Church became defining religious influences for the boy and the family. Again, Moody's son William's biography reinforces this point. He writes,

Shortly after the father's death this good man visited the destitute family and helped them... No sooner had the attendance of the Moody children been secured than they were commissioned to bring in other scholars. In a sense, therefore, Mr. Moody's Sunday-school mission work began at an earlier date than is commonly supposed, for as a child he and his brother George frequently acted as aggressive home missionaries in securing recruits for the village Sunday-school... It was not till after he left home that his actual personal conversion occurred, but it was

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 81.

<sup>33</sup> Gundry argues, "Certainly to say that his contact with Unitarianism as a youth had any significant impact upon his mature thinking and outlook would be an overstatement." Gundry, 19. In a sense I do agree with Gundry, but we have noted William R. Moody's and William Daniel's assertion about the important role Everett played in his father's life. To say the man who became a father figure and who the family credits with being a key figure in holding them together had no impact does not follow. The point is Everett influenced Moody in the realm of practical Christianity, rather than his theological convictions.

to a tender conscience and an open heart that the gospel invitation was given, and a soul already trained to love and honor God readily accepted His offer of salvation. The Christian training of his mother and the faithfulness of her good pastor were a sacred remembrance in all his after experiences, and he ever spoke appreciatively of the debt he owed to the ministry of Mr. Everett.<sup>34</sup>

Everett's place in the young Moody's life is shown by the sharp contrast Moody draws between Everett and William C. Tenney, the man who succeeded him at Northfield. Later Moody recalled that he came "to look upon Sunday with a kind of dread. Very few kind words were associated with that day. I don't know that the minister ever said a kind thing to me, or ever once put his hand on my head. I don't know that he ever noticed me..."<sup>35</sup>

Everett's lessons on the power of kindness and love stand in contrast to Moody's time in school. While this time as a student was brief, it served to reinforce the power of love. In his later sermons, Moody recounted his experience in school.

The schoolmaster that I was taught by was a harsh, severe man. It was a word and a blow with him, and generally the blow came first. I knew what it was to have severity in my school days, and I also knew what it was to have kindness. After that stern school teacher came a kind hearted lady, who commenced to rule by love... The first time that I broke the rule though, instead of seeing a rattan in her hand, I saw tears in her eyes... when we were alone she took me by the hand and talked to me in a low kind voice, with tears in her eyes. If you love me, she said, keep

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<sup>34</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 21-2.

<sup>35</sup> Goss, 601.



my rules. I tell you I never broke a rule after that. Her kind word went straight to my heart.<sup>36</sup>

These early years provided a lesson on God's love. They illustrated to Moody a response to poverty that linked the notion of a loving God with a charitable response to the needs of others. This made a powerful impact on the young Dwight Moody, and in the case of his family, it was effective. While the theological import of these acts of charity may not yet have been fully processed by Moody, the fact that he recalled and referenced them indicates the important role they played in his life.

## ***B. Moody's early religious life***

### ***1. Boston***

The early years at Northfield served as Moody's introduction to organized religion and as a demonstration of Christian charity. Boston, New England's urban centre, would be the place of his continued theological formation. Northfield was unable to keep the fancy of the energetic young Moody; he reportedly remarked, "I am tired of this! I am not going to stay around here any longer. I am going to the city."<sup>37</sup> So as a seventeen-year old he migrated to Boston seeking new opportunities and financial gain.<sup>38</sup> Although Moody's time in Boston was relatively brief, it would provide two important pieces in the formation of his theology. First, Boston provided Moody's first look at the new urban face of America. Second, Moody was converted to evangelical Christianity during his time in Boston.

By 1854, the year Moody arrived, Boston was a growing, bustling, diverse city of about 150,000. Before arriving in Boston, Moody probably had never even seen

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<sup>36</sup> D. L. Moody, *Glad Tidings* (New York: The Tribune Association, 1876), 164.

<sup>37</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 35.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

anyone who was not Anglo-American. Upon arriving, he would have been exposed to Asians, African-Americans, Jews and various Eastern Europeans. The combination of the sights, sounds and smells of the city must have been both exhilarating and frightening to the young lad from Northfield.

It is simply not possible to know how Moody processed the urban world of Boston, but it is clear it widened his horizons. His letters home are either reminiscent of home or reflect the wonder of a wide-eyed youth. For example, in an 1854 letter to his brothers, Moody wrote, "A steam hot gas ship come in and sutch a site I never seen before. There was a ship from Liverpool loaded with emergrans. All the Greeks in Boston was there. The sung a song when they come in site of their friends. Sutch meetings as there was there I never see."<sup>39</sup> Boston exposed Moody to this new urban world; however, it was not until the Chicago years that he truly grappled with the challenges of the new American city.

## **2. Conversion**

*"I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the Spirit will live forever."*<sup>40</sup>

— D. L. Moody

The most significant event during Moody's time in Boston was his religious conversion. Shortly after arriving in Boston, Moody began attending the Mount Vernon Congregational Church.<sup>41</sup> His uncle, Samuel Holton, agreed to employ Moody on the

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<sup>39</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to brothers, April 9, 1854, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Dwight L. Moody Papers. Another letter to his sister speaks of a girl he left behind named Delia. He asks her if she sees Delia to "tell her how much I want to kiss her" and that "there is one or two pretty girls down here but none like Delia and look the world and you will never find the likes of her." D. L. Moody, letter to Sister Lizzie, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1854, Moody Bible Institute Archives. In order to let the reader get the full sense of Moody's thoughts and capacities, I will present all of his letters unedited.

<sup>40</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, December 23, 1899; and *New York Times* December 23, 1899.

<sup>41</sup> In a letter to his mother Moody writes, "I go to meating at Mount Vernon St. Orthodx. I don't know how it is spelt but you know what I mean." Quoted in Pollack, *Moody*, 24.

condition he attend Sunday School. Thus, Moody ended up at Mount Vernon. At Mount Vernon, Moody was befriended by a middle-aged Sunday School teacher named Edwin Kimball. Kimball, concerned about the soul of the new young lad in his class, stopped by the store where Moody worked on April 21, 1855. Years later Moody would recount this event to fellow evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman:

When I was in Boston I used to attend a Sunday School class, and one day I recollect my teacher came around behind the counter of the shop I was at work in, and put his hand upon my shoulder and talked to me about Christ and my soul. I had not felt that I had a soul till then. I said to myself: "this is a very strange thing. Here is a man who never saw me till lately, and he is weeping over my sins, and I never shed a tear about them." But I understand it now, and know what it is to have a passion for men's souls and weep over their sins. I don't remember what he said, but I can feel the power of that man's hand on my shoulder to-night. It was not long after that I was brought into the Kingdom of God.<sup>42</sup>

Although Moody and others portray this event as definitive, it was more important existentially than intellectually. Moody's newfound Christianity was embryonic and his conversion was as much a process as an event. Not quite four weeks after his experience with Kimball, the teenager met with the deacons of Mount Vernon Congregational Church on a Wednesday evening to seek membership. During the interview, the primitive nature of Moody's faith was apparent and Moody was told he was not yet ready for membership. Kimball, who attended the meeting, later described it in the following manner,

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of D. L. Moody* (Philadelphia: American Bible House, 1900), 76.

I remember the chief question and its answer—the longest he gave: “Mr. Moody, what has Christ done for us all—for you—which entitles Him to our love?” “I don’t know,” he said, “I think Christ has done a good deal for us; but I don’t think of anything in particular as I know of.”<sup>43</sup>

Despite Moody’s dreadful performance, the church remained hopeful about the young man. The minutes of the meeting read:

Dwight L. Moody. Boards 43 Court St. Has been baptized. First awakened on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April. Became anxious about himself... saw himself a sinner, and sin now seems hateful and holiness desirable. Thinks he has repented. Has proposed to give up sin and feels dependent on Christ for forgiveness... loves the Scriptures... prays once a day... and desires to be useful... religiously educated... been in the city a year from Northfield in this state. Is not ashamed to be known as a Christian. 18 years old.<sup>44</sup>

Undaunted, Moody continued to work at his faith and sought a second interview in March 1856. Again, the minutes are telling:

Mr. Moody thinks he has made some progress since he has been here before—at least in knowledge. He has maintained his habits of prayer and reading the Bible. Is fully determined to adhere to the cause of Christ always. Feels that it would be very bad he should join the church and then turn. Must repent and ask

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<sup>43</sup> Edward Kimball, “Mr. Moody’s Admission to the Church,” *New York Witness Extra*, April 1876 (11<sup>th</sup> Week).

<sup>44</sup> Langdon S. Ward, deacon of the Mount Vernon Church, “Dwight L. Moody’s experience 1855-56,” typescript, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

forgiveness, for Christ's sake. Will never give up his hope, or love Christ less, whether admitted to church or not his prevailing intention is to give up his will to God.<sup>45</sup>

Although Moody's theological understanding remained somewhat suspect, the deacons were persuaded by his passion and commitment. In May, Moody was added to the membership rolls of the Mount Vernon Church. Even so, while Moody's faith had its origins in Boston, it would not fully mature until his years in Chicago.

The Mount Vernon Congregational Church in Boston would also be the context for Moody's first extended exposure to evangelicalism. A group of Bostonians who rejected both the "doctrinal exclusiveness" of Park Street Church and the "free thinking charms" of King's Chapel founded the church in 1842.<sup>46</sup> They established Mount Vernon within a few yards of both churches and called the Reverend Edward N. Kirk as pastor.

Before coming to Mount Vernon, Kirk had earned a reputation in New England as a revivalist and pastor. He had worked with Charles Finney in upstate New York and would later publish a series of lectures on revivals.<sup>47</sup> The church had invited Kirk with the goal of promoting revivalism in Boston, and Kirk became the one to provide Moody with his initial introduction to evangelicalism and revivalism.

Kirk's brand of revivalism was distinctive. He was an urban revivalist and his style was decidedly different from others of the day. Kirk was sophisticated and his preaching was fluent and articulate. Moody would later claim Kirk was "one of the most eloquent men I ever heard."<sup>48</sup> Kirk eschewed crude emotionalism and

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 44.

<sup>46</sup> Pollock, *Moody*, 25.

<sup>47</sup> Edward N. Kirk, *Lectures on Revivals* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1875).

<sup>48</sup> Pollock, *Moody*, 12.

manipulation, preferring to woo his audiences. His brand of revivalism was urbane and respectable.<sup>49</sup>

Further, Kirk espoused views that would later characterize Moody's work. He was a forceful proponent of charity. In 1843, sensing the threat that urban poverty posed to the Protestant faith he declared, "Our whole system of education, our modes of life, our very standards of personal piety need great renovation." Charity, in particular, was Kirk's solution. However, Kirk had more in mind than random acts of kindness; he believed charity would drive people to understand poverty and address its root causes. On this, he was explicit: "When men love their neighbors as themselves, the causes of poverty will soon be sought out, and the remedy applied as far as possible." Consequently, Kirk challenged his Mount Vernon congregation to expose their children to the urban poor, maintaining that, "the removal of human wretchedness and elevation of degraded man is the business of life."<sup>50</sup>

Kirk's commitment moved beyond rhetoric. Mount Vernon was involved in forming a YMCA, the Mount Vernon Association of Young Men, from which the Boston YMCA would develop. The Mount Vernon group established a twofold goal of helping men grow in their Christian faith and working to improve the welfare of humanity.<sup>51</sup>

Young women were also part of Kirk's work. Kirk was instrumental in the formation of the Ladies' Society for the Promotion of Education at the West. Kirk, along with Edward Beecher, delivered the inaugural address for the society. The Society, founded at Mount Vernon in 1846, was designed to provide education for females, as well as provide female educators, in the Western part of the United States.

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<sup>49</sup> Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 22.

<sup>50</sup> Edward Norris Kirk, *A Plea for the Poor...* (Boston, 1843), 20, 23, 26, 40, cited in Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 163.

<sup>51</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 81, 82.

The society was also a response to Roman Catholicism. Both Beecher and Kirk pointed out the network of Roman Catholic schools in the west and its superior use of females as both students and teachers. Kirk underscored the perceived threat, "The very fact that Rome is so multiplying her machinery in this country, is an indication that we must change our tactics, and meet her on her ground, and adapt our modes of defense to her attack."<sup>52</sup> Although Kirk clearly had deep concerns about Romanism, he was measured compared to other Protestants. As Timothy Smith described it, Kirk, like many of the other revivalists, "believed the church's task was to save Catholics, not scorn them."<sup>53</sup>

Kirk's impact on the newly converted Moody is hard to measure. Pollock argues that Kirk was instrumental in preparing Moody for his fateful meeting with Kimball.<sup>54</sup> Even less clear is the extent of the impact Kirk had on Moody's concept of revivalism and his social vision. Moody would later express admiration for Kirk's speaking ability and his approach to evangelistic preaching would reflect some of Kirk's methods. While not smooth and urbane like Kirk, Moody would likewise reject flamboyance and emotional appeals. Further, Moody's approach to social ills would parallel Kirk's. Kirk emphasized charity, education and temperance, and he focused on converting rather than ridiculing Roman Catholics. Kirk fully embraced the YMCA, an institution that Moody came to hold dear. Admittedly, Moody was a very raw young man, with an immature faith, and Pollock notes Moody often slept through Kirk's sermons. Still, Moody saw the energy at Mount Vernon. He saw its ministries and felt their impact personally. Consequently, while not a major influence on Moody, Kirk cannot be dismissed as unimportant in Moody's development.

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<sup>52</sup> Edward Beecher, *History of the Formation of the Ladies Society for the Promotion of Education at the West; with two addresses, delivered at its organization, by the Reverent Edward Beecher, D. D., and Reverent E. N. Kirk* (Boston: Henry Mason, 1846), 7 – 10, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 168.

<sup>54</sup> Pollock, *Moody*, 12-13.

### 3. Chicago

*"Rough-and-tumble-business Chicago after the great fire was a regional capital, and in many ways, because of its innovations in industrial method and in architecture, because of its mixture of brutal wickedness and revolutionary newness, the blood of the yards, the showpiece gems of the lakefront, the seething of its immigrant slums, because of its violence, corruption, and creative energy, it was also a world city."*

— Saul Bellow<sup>55</sup>

*"Hog butcher for the World, Tool maker, stacker of wheat, Player with railroads and nations' freight handler."*

— Carl Sandburg<sup>56</sup>

While Boston was the scene of Moody's first exposure to evangelicalism, Chicago was where his new religious sentiments matured. Chicago is where Moody was made into a fully-fledged evangelical. Chicago was significant in three ways relative to Moody's theology and social vision. First, Moody was immersed in the evangelical community in Chicago. While Moody began his conversion in Boston, it was completed and solidified in Chicago. It was in Chicago that Moody became fully immersed in the teachings, practices and personalities of the evangelical faith. Second, Chicago defined the problem of urbanization for Moody. As we have seen and will see, Moody was personally and intensely involved with Chicago's poor. He knew their problems firsthand. Urban poverty and its accompanying ills were not abstract concepts for Moody. He lived in the stench and served the sick. He saw the squatters—especially their children. He saw the families devastated by alcoholism. He saw the labour unrest and the turmoil and chaos it was creating. He knew the fear of both the labourer and the owner. These events framed his understanding of urban social ills. Third was his

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<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Donald L. Miller, *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 9.

<sup>56</sup> Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems* (New York: Henry Holt, 1916), 3.



relationship with Roman Catholics. Moody's openness is made all the more remarkable when seen in the context of the hostility directed towards Catholics in Chicago. Moody had possibly imbibed some of Kirk's moderate response to Catholics in Boston; however, Moody's tone was even less strident.<sup>57</sup> Regardless, Moody broke with the cultural norm and with most of his peers on this question.<sup>58</sup> On this point, Moody distanced himself from the Protestant, middle-class values of the day.

### ***a. Early Spiritual Growth***

The religious faith Moody professed in Boston began to develop in Chicago, but as his interview at Mount Vernon had demonstrated, he was far more zealous than wise. During his first months in Chicago, he pestered his coworkers about their lives, railing against billiards, cards, theatre and the like. Some of his colleagues expressed frustration with his imperious attitude, and later in life Moody would acknowledge his overbearing ways.<sup>59</sup>

However, Moody began to mature as well. His early letters home from Chicago reflect the maturing of the initial changes that had begun in Boston. On September 25, 1856, Moody wrote to his mother,

I went into a prayer meeting last night and as soon as I made myself known I had friends enough. After meeting they com to me and seemed to be as glad to see me as if I were their earthly

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<sup>57</sup> Beecher, 13 – 17. Moody never engaged in the rhetoric used by Kirk in the previously mentioned address by Kirk in 1846.

<sup>58</sup> For example, see Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (1835); and Horace Bushnell, *A Letter to His Holiness Pope Gregory XVI*, 1846. He distances himself from his supporters as well. For example, in 1870 William E. Dodge, a staunch Moody supporter, denounced attempts by Roman Catholics to attempt to get tax money for their parochial schools. Richard Lowitt, *A Merchant Prince in the Nineteenth Century: William E. Dodge* (New York, 1954), 345.

<sup>59</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 63-4.

brother. God is the same hear that He was in Boston and in him I  
can find piece.<sup>60</sup>

In October of the same year, he wrote his brother Warren,

Warren I wish you could know more about Christ who is the  
same everywhere although the people don't think much of him  
out here but I want to have you pray for me night and day for I  
am in a very wicked city where many of the folks keep the stores  
open on the holy Sabbath and that is enough to sicken anyone.<sup>61</sup>

During these early days, Moody came into contact with Mrs. H. Phillips. Mrs. Phillips was referred to as "Mother" Phillips at her home church, First Baptist Church. Beginning sometime in 1857, Moody began rooming at the Phillips's home. She encouraged Moody to memorize scripture, be faithful in prayer and witness to and pray for the lost. She was also involved with Chicago's poor children, working in Sunday School. She may, in fact, have been the inspiration for Moody's own Sunday School work.<sup>62</sup> Phillips' impact was apparent in his letters home. A letter to his mother in 1858 reveals his burden for prayer. Moody pleads for prayer on his behalf, prayer for the lost young men of the city and prayer for the ability to witness to those young men around him.<sup>63</sup>

The letters from the early 1860s confirm Moody's deepening religious commitment. In February 1860 he wrote to his mother and asked her "not forget to pray

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<sup>60</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to mother, September 25, 1856, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers. Again, all the letters are unedited.

<sup>61</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to brother, October 19, 1856, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>62</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 53.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 53.

for him.”<sup>64</sup> In April, he wrote to his brother George on hearing of the death of George’s wife.

I have just received news from home that you have met with a great affliction. One that was nearer to you than any other living person on earth has been called to her rest but all is well. I have thought of how I should like to have the death messenger for me when I think that there is rest on the other side of Jordan for the weary in the sweet fields of Eden... The world has no charms for me when I look up but the trouble with God’s children is they do not look up enough... Your sweet wife is beckoning you on to a higher holy life... I hope you will look to Jesus for comfort. Go to your closet in secret prayer and there you will find peace in your soul... God will bless you if only you will look to him. Jesus my all to heaven has gone, his track I see and I will pursue.<sup>65</sup>

The letters from 1861 continue these themes. From a letter in February: “Tell all my friends there is nothing like the religion of Jesus Christ and I am in hopes the family altar is kept up thar to home.”<sup>66</sup> In June, he wrote to his mother about his siblings, encouraging her to “tell them to love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hart and we will all meet in heaven. Tell them to pray for me...”<sup>67</sup> In November, again to his mother, he told of his burden for his siblings:

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<sup>64</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to mother, February 10, 1860, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>65</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to George, April 26, 1860, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers. This letter is only available in a transcribed version. Obviously, the transcriber corrected the spelling and grammar.

<sup>66</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to Folks, February 12, 1861, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>67</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to Mother, June 5, 1861, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

I would like to see you all and talk with you about my Savoir that seems so near to me. Oh what would life be without Christ. I sometimes get to looking down on the dark world of sin but when I look to Jesus it makes me look up. Mother I often think of you and say shall we meet in heaven. Oh it is a solem question to think of. Have made up my mind to make it my lifes business to get to heaven. I want to invite all my brothers and sisters than oh, I often pray for them and hope you do the same. I wish you would write to Luther and urge him to come to Jesus. Oh I would like to see him a converted man.<sup>68</sup>

The seriousness of Moody's commitment is obvious. Also conspicuous are the evangelical themes: biblical imagery, a passion for the lost, a sense of sin and the hope of heaven. Evangelicalism had taken root in the young Dwight Moody.

### ***b. Moody and the 1857-58 Revival***

Shortly after his arrival in Chicago, Moody's newly established spiritual inclinations were reinforced by religious fervour sweeping through the city, as the 1857 New York City revival made its way west to Chicago. This revival would be the initial means by which Moody would be drawn into the evangelical community in Chicago. It would also be one of his first lessons on how revivals were done and their impact on communities.

In America, the First and Second Great Awakenings often overshadow the 1857-1858 Revival. The definitive work on the revival is by Kathryn T. Long. Long argues that the neglect of the 1857-1858 Revival is the result of several factors. First, it falls outside the parameters of the Second Great Awakening and thus is lost amid the

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<sup>68</sup>D. L. Moody, letter to mother, November 19, 1861, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

great amount of work around that event. Second, it just predates the Civil War and is overshadowed by it. Finally, until recently, there has been very little work done on religion and the Civil War.<sup>69</sup> In its time, however, the 1857–1858 Revival was seen as seminal. In fact, it was understood by many as one of the most important events of the nineteenth century, in American religious history or even in all of church history. It was variously described as “our American Awakening,” “the event of the century,” America’s third “great awakening” and simply “The Great Revival.”<sup>70</sup>

The Revival was reported to have started in the North Dutch Church at the corner of Fulton and William Streets in lower Manhattan.<sup>71</sup> This strategic location was just a short walk from both Broadway and the business corridor on Wall Street. The key figure was a layperson, an ex-businessperson named Jeremiah Calvin Lamphere (b. 1809). In 1857, Lamphere turned his back on the pursuit of wealth and joined the staff of the North Dutch Church as a city missionary.

In light of the church’s location, Lamphere determined to start weekly prayer meetings designed to attract businesspersons.<sup>72</sup> Within six months, the prayer meetings were said to have spread to “every nook and corner of the great republic.”<sup>73</sup> The movement would not be confined to North America. As Richard Carwardine points out,

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<sup>69</sup> Long, 3–6.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 3. Long cites James W. Alexander, *The Revival and Its Lessons* (New York: American Tract Society, 1858), 14; Talbot W Chambers, *The Noon Prayer Meeting of the North Dutch Church* (New York: Board of Publications, Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1858), 285; and *Examiner*, March 4, 1858.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 12–14. The account of the revival found in the next 2 paragraphs is drawn from these pages.

<sup>72</sup> The early phase of the Revival in New York actively sought to limit women’s involvement. Thus the event is sometimes just referred to as the “Businessmen’s Revival.” For a detailed discussion, see Chapter 4, “Gender Issues and the Masculinization of Urban Piety.” Long also cites Sandra Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 87; and Leonard Sweet, *The Minister’s Wife: Her Role in Nineteenth-Century American evangelicalism*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), chapter 2.

<sup>73</sup> Samuel Irenaeus Prime, *The Power of Prayer, Illustrated in the Wonderful Displays of Divine Grace at the Fulton Street and Other Meetings* (New York: Scribner, 1858), 47. Prime is careful to point out the movement also spread to the American South, citing revivals in Richmond, Savannah, Mobile, Vicksburg, New Orleans and Memphis.

it is hardly surprising this revival would, "soon be followed by spectacular revivals in Ulster, Wales, and many parts of Britain."<sup>74</sup>

Moody was already active in daily prayer meetings in Chicago before the revival. In a letter to his mother dated January 6, 1857, he described his experience: "I go to meeting every night. Oh how I enjoy it. It seems as if God were here himself."<sup>75</sup> A similar refrain was found in a letter to his brother George later in the same year. Moody spoke of the effect the meetings were having on his life and reflected his growing emphasis on God's love:

... I have enjoyed more religion hear than I ever have in my life.  
Oh George I wish sometimes you were out hear although we did  
not youst to get along very well but I think we could live together  
well enough now. Do you enjoy as much religion as you have I  
hope you will holde on to the promises in the Bible. I find the  
better I live the more enjoyment I have & the more I think of God  
& his love the less I think of this worlds troubles. George don't  
let anything keep you from the full enjoyment of Gods love. I  
think we have things sometimes come a bo(?) us to try ower faith  
and God likes us to cling on as the Sarnest sais in one place God  
likes to chastise them whome he loves so let us pray for each  
other. I have brout you befor God in my prayers & hope you have  
done the same.<sup>76</sup>

As these letters indicated, by the time the revival hit Chicago, Moody was already quite active in religious meetings. The revival heightened Moody's growing

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<sup>74</sup> Richard Carwardine, *"The Second Great Awakening in Comparative Perspective: Revivals and Culture in the United States and Britain,"* *Modern Christian Revivals* ed. Edith L. Blumhofer and Randall Balmer (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 88.

<sup>75</sup> D.L. Moody, letter to mother, January 6, 1857, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>76</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to brother, March 17, 1857, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

religious consciousness. Commenting on the effect of these meetings just before his death, Moody remarked, "I would like before I go hence to see the whole church of God quickened as it was in '57 (sic)."<sup>77</sup>

One of the unique characteristics of this revival was the prohibition against discussing what were described as "controverted points."<sup>78</sup> Chief among these controverted points was slavery. Later, we shall learn of Moody's involvement with the abolitionist movement in Boston and note the deep anti-slavery sentiments of his home and surrounding towns in Northwest Massachusetts. Despite this, Moody never complained about this prohibition in any of his comments about the revival.<sup>79</sup> Clearly, the meetings moved Moody; he obviously observed them carefully and absorbed their methodology. In fact, avoiding "controverted points" became typical of his ministry.

The 1857–1858 Revival would shape Moody in a number of other ways. First, this revival would provide a template for the "style" Moody would employ. Specifically, the Revival emphasized decorum and order. Signs were posted reminding the attendees that the "Brethren are earnestly requested to adhere to the 5 minute rule," and "Prayers & Exhortations Not to exceed 5 minutes, *in order to give all an opportunity, NOT MORE than 2 CONSECUTIVE PRAYERS or EXHORTATIONS*" (italics and capitalization original).<sup>80</sup> Numerous historians have pointed out Moody's

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<sup>77</sup> D.L. Moody, quoted in J. Edwin Orr, *The Fervent Prayer, The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 198.

<sup>78</sup> Long, figure 4. See the illustrations presented on pages 92 and following. In addition to the slavery question, the other main controverted point was whether women should be permitted to pray aloud in interdenominational prayer meetings.

<sup>79</sup> This is not to say Moody's response to this prohibition on discussion of slavery was universal. In fact, many abolitionists attacked the Revival. For example, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote, "Instead of the great revival of 1858, we should be happy to read the great reformation of 1858... A revival of religion that brings no repentance and reformation is false and spurious... We believe in no raptures, in no ecstasies, in no experiences that do not bring the soul into communion with Him who declared He came to set at liberty them that are bound and bruised." Harriet Beecher Stowe, "The Revival," *Independent*, March 11, 1858.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

appropriation of Victorian business practice and middle-class sensibilities,<sup>81</sup> but few trace these traits to the 1857–1858 Revival. Nevertheless, it seems quite apparent from the letters we have seen that Moody was personally moved by the revival. Given Moody's own comments during the revival and his nostalgic reflections about the revival towards the end of his life, it is apparent he looked to it as a model for revivals.

Most germane to this study is the approach to social questions taken during the 1857–1858 Revival. In many ways, the revival represented a new understanding of the social impact revivals should have. In a section entitled, "Revivalism without Social Betterment," Kathryn Long describes the shift. She states the revival "produced no groundswell of ethical concern." According to Long, the old New England model had linked "conversionist piety" and "moral reform," meaning that individual conversions and social salvation were linked. The 1857–1858 Revival broke this linkage. Specifically, social salvation became a function of individual conversions, that is, "any needed social transformation would result from the cumulative personal reforms of regenerate individuals and from the direct supernatural intervention of God."<sup>82</sup>

Consequently, while the goal of a righteous republic remained, the means to accomplish it changed. Individual conversions became the only means to bring about meaningful social transformation. The result was a socially conservative revivalism.<sup>83</sup> Moody absorbed some of this approach. While it is true that Moody was committed to individual conversion as the best means of bringing about social change, this does not mean Moody opposed reform. Rather, as we shall see, he prioritized it. For Moody evangelism was always the top priority. The 1857–1858 Revival helped to form that prioritization.

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<sup>81</sup> See, for example, McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*; and Marsden, *Fundamentalism*. This is not to say the revival did not reflect those values; rather, Moody took his cues from the revival, not the business community.

<sup>82</sup> Long, 124-5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Long carefully makes this case in chapters 5 and 6. See also Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 85-93.



### *c. Moody and the Sunday School*

Moody's work with the Sunday School movement drew him deeper still into the world of evangelicalism. It provided another set of experiences that helped shape his theology, for it was through his work in Sunday Schools that he became involved in the life of urban slums.<sup>84</sup>

These early years in Chicago saw the blossoming of Moody's intense love and concern for children. W. H. Daniels describes Moody as having "an intense and almost womanly love for children. He never seemed happier than when in the midst of a crowd of boys and girls, with whom he romped in the wildest fashion, beating them at their own sports and games, until he won their fullest confidence..."<sup>85</sup> Consequently, Moody tried bringing local boys with him to church. After several weeks of unruliness from his young charges, Moody was encouraged to find another way to reach young people. This episode foreshadowed what would be an ongoing tension in Moody's life and work. Evangelicalism in the United States during this time reflected middle-class mores and sensibilities. Moody embraced many of these values personally. Yet these same values often hindered interaction with the working masses, the very ones for whom Moody felt most burdened.<sup>86</sup> Faced with the choice of conforming to middle-class sensibilities or pursuing ministry, Moody chose to act on his religious convictions. In this case, the Sunday School provided a way for Moody to pursue his burden for poor children, without interfering with the sensibilities of the Sunday service.

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<sup>84</sup> The definitive study on the American Sunday School movement is Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790 - 1880*. Boylan explores Moody's place in the Sunday School movement.

<sup>85</sup> Daniels, *Moody*, 37.

<sup>86</sup> Moody understood this and struggled to overcome the gulf between the evangelical church and the working class. One such attempt, which we shall examine more closely later, is the establishment of Bible training schools designed to produce "gap men," i.e., workers to bridge the gap between the clergy and the masses. For a detailed discussion, see James F. Findlay, Jr., "Gapmen and the Gospel: The Early Days of Moody Bible Institute," *Church History*, XXXI (September, 1962), 110.

Sunday Schools had their origin in England when Robert Raikes and Thomas Stock first established a Sunday School for the poor and orphaned in Gloucester in 1780. Because of their efforts, laypeople and clergy began forming similar schools throughout England. Out of these efforts, the Sunday School movement was formed. The movement experienced astonishing growth— by 1800, 200,000 children were enrolled in English Sunday Schools. By 1850, this number had risen to two million.

By the 1790s, several of these schools had taken root in the United States. Over the next quarter of a century, Sunday Schools sprang up as part of a loose network of free schools operated by various religious and philanthropic groups to provide basic education to poor and otherwise disadvantaged children. Although virtually all these schools included religious instruction as part of their curriculum, the amount of religious instruction was a function of the sponsorship of the school. For example, schools run by the New York Free School Society combined daily academic instruction with Sunday attendance at Sunday Schools.

A critical event in the development of the movement occurred in October 1811, when Presbyterian missionary Robert May opened an evening Sunday School in Philadelphia. Unlike previous free schools, he taught without pay and taught exclusively religious doctrine. May proved to be a trendsetter, and during the decade from 1810 to 1820 schools resembling May's became increasingly common. These institutions were especially popular among young, newly converted Protestants like Moody, as a means of expressing their newfound beliefs. By 1820, there were several hundred Sunday Schools in the United States and May's model was dominant. Now Sunday Schools emphasized religious instruction over reading and writing, although most taught the latter subjects as a means of inculcating the former. In fact, many Sunday School leaders began arguing for the establishment of a system of free daily

schools so that Sunday Schools would be free to teach religion alone.<sup>87</sup> Admittedly, the schools also fulfilled a social purpose as they served to control children's activities. Employment of children in industry had brought together youth of similar ages who worked in factories on weekdays and spent their Sundays playing in alleys and wharves, disturbing nearby families and profaning the day. Sunday Schools provided an alternative to such rowdiness. The schools also taught proper behaviour, enforcing cleanliness, providing Sunday clothing and reprimanding children for lying, swearing, talking in an indecent manner, or other misbehaviour.<sup>88</sup>

Still, the primary aim of Sunday Schools was teaching basic Protestantism to children of the unchurched poor. The Bible provided the text for teaching the truths of the gospel, knowledge of which, Protestants believed, was essential for moral living and good citizenship. Protestants felt that knowledge of the Bible would teach pupils the duty required of them as social, rational and accountable beings.<sup>89</sup>

In the Sunday School movement, Moody found the perfect alternative to the Plymouth Congregational Church. In this context, he could work with children without the constraints of middle-class manners. The Sunday School would allow him to express his newfound faith aggressively.

Moody hired space in a rundown saloon on the North side of Chicago and threw himself into the school. In a letter home dated February 12, 1861, he wrote, "... I have

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<sup>87</sup> Robert May, *Sunday School Minutebook, October 20, 1811 - January 26, 1812*, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>88</sup> Albert Matthews, *Early Sunday Schools in Boston* (1919), 280.

<sup>89</sup> *Kensington Sunday School Association Minutes, Constitution, 1817*, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

been holding meetings in my school every night this winter. It has taken all my time.”<sup>90</sup>

In June, he reiterated the point, “I am drov more now than ever in my life.”<sup>91</sup>

The work was located in a notorious area called “the Sands.” In 1865, the *Chicago Tribune* described it as home to “the most beastly sensuality and darkest crimes.”<sup>92</sup> The *Tribune*’s account was confirmed by an early colleague of Moody’s named Watts.

Shortly before this (Moody’s coming to Chicago) the honorable John Wentworth, Mayor of Chicago, had determined to rid that part of North Side designated as the “Sand Lots.” It was covered by a large number of board shanties and these were occupied by as miserable a lot of mortals as I ever saw. They were in continual broil and drunkenness and fighting, often accompanied by murder... Moody rented a tumbled down shack over in the Sands, a poverty-stricken hell in North Chicago. Breweries prospered; It was an abode of thieves; harlots; drunks and murders. From Moody’s Sunday School his voice could reach 200 saloons, houses of infamy. There were dope fiends, old soaks, street walkers, policemen, plug-uglies, tough boys, hard hitting teamsters, second story men...<sup>93</sup>

Not surprisingly because of his efforts in the Sands, many in the religious community dubbed him “Crazy Moody.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> D. L. Moody, letter home, February 12, 1861. Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL. In another letter to his mother from June of 1861, D.L. Moody says he has “been to prayer meetings every night but 2 for 8 months.”

<sup>91</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to mother, June 5, 1861. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>92</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, July 3, 1865.

<sup>93</sup> “Watts” letter dated 1908, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

<sup>94</sup> Daniels, *Moody*, 37.

They also objected to his methods. Moody often rode through a particularly wretched area of the Sands aptly named "Little Hell," handing out candy in order to get the children to follow him to his meetings at the school. Some in the religious community accused him of bribery. Moody's defenders retorted that Moody's "missionary sugar" was no different from fine architecture, fresco and gilding; inlaid pulpits, choirs, rhetoric, three-bank organs and the like used to entice more elegant sinners.<sup>95</sup>

The religious community was not the only one to consider Moody "crazy." Sometime in late 1859 or early 1860, Moody returned to Northfield for a visit. His uncle Zebulon recorded the following event:

My nephew Dwight is as crazy, crazy as a March hare. Came on from Chicago last week for a flying visit. I had not seen him but he drove into my yard this a. m. You know how cold it was and his face was as red as red flannel. Before I could say good morning he shouted, "Good morning Uncle Zebulon what are you going to do for Christ today?" Of course, I was startled and finally managed to say, "Come in Dwight and we will talk it over." "No, I can't stop but I want you to think about it," and he turned the sleigh around and went up the hill like a streak of lightening. I tell you he is crazy.<sup>96</sup>

Although Uncle Zebulon's comments were not specifically in response to Moody's work with children, they demonstrated how some processed Moody's zeal for Christian work.

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<sup>95</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 67. Moody also received criticism from the press. For example, see the *Chicago Times* of October 28, 1867.

<sup>96</sup> Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

Moody, however, seemed immune to these criticisms. Regardless of the concerns of the middle-class press and religious establishment, he was determined to minister to poor children. This phase of Moody's career became somewhat immortalized by a caricature of Moody riding on a pony through slums followed by ragged children. William Moody's biography includes an eyewitness recollection of these days. Moody was described as riding through the slums and being greeted by the delighted cries of children. He carried candy in his pockets and generously spread it among the children. Moody knew the children personally and inquired by name after those who were absent.<sup>97</sup>

This account by a witness to Moody's work during this time gives insight into the school and Moody's approach.

The first meeting I ever saw him at was in a little old shanty that had been abandoned by a saloon-keeper. Mr. Moody had got the place to hold the meetings in at night. I went there a little late; and the first thing I saw was a man standing up with a few tallow candles around him, holding a negro boy, and trying to read to him the story of the Prodigal Son and a great many words he could not read out, and had to skip. I thought, "If the Lord can ever use such an instrument as that for His honor and glory, it will astonish me." After that meeting was over, Mr. Moody said to me, "Reynolds, I have got only one talent; I have no education, but I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to do something for him: I want you to pray for me."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 113-14. William attributed this description to a D. W. McWilliams. He dated it from around 1861.

<sup>98</sup> Daniels, *Moody*, 36-7.

His daughter recounted another story from the Sunday School days in 1858. She recalled hearing of a particular family with “a giant father habitually drunk, a tiny wife who supported the family and six illbred children.” Moody almost daily took the family food, coal or firewood.<sup>99</sup> It is worth noting that in this story, Moody’s actions were strikingly similar to the care he received as a boy from the young Oliver Everett.

Moody described the early Sunday School years in the following way,

Sunday was a busy day for me then. (1856–1858) During the week I would be out of town as a commercial traveler... but I always managed to get back by Saturday night. I would be up by six to get the hall ready for the Sunday School. Every Saturday night a German society held a dance there and I had to roll out beer kegs, sweep out the sawdust, clean up generally. I did not think it right to hire it done on Sunday so I did the work. This took most of the morning and then I would drum up the boys and girls and by two in the afternoon we would have a full hall. After school I would visit the absent scholars and invite the parents to an evening service that I held in a deserted saloon and we would hold an after meeting and I presided. When the day was over I was tired out. I didn’t know much at that time. A great many men want to do big things. That is the mistake I made when I started out. I wanted to preach to intelligent people but I found that they didn’t like to hear me. So I began with children but it was years

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<sup>99</sup> Document entitled “By Emma Moody Fitt,” n. d. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

before I could talk profitably to grown people. I talked to children and it was a grand school. It was the preparation I needed.<sup>100</sup>

While targeting children, he also sought out their parents. As we will see, this aspect of Moody's ministry developed and eventually led to the transformation of the Sunday School into a church. It also clearly demonstrated that his commitment to practise his faith was extraordinary. Moody worked tirelessly; teaching, seeking out absent students, setting up the hall himself.

The Sunday School would become an extraordinary success. Mixing an intense love for the children with simple Bible lessons and practical help for the students' families, Moody's school flourished. In the summer of 1860, Moody wrote to his brother excitedly that the school was "on the increas all of the time."<sup>101</sup> By the end of 1860, the school attendance had grown to about 1,500. It had also become famous, so famous that President-elect Abraham Lincoln chose to stop by the school on the way to his inauguration.<sup>102</sup> In many ways, the Sunday School illustrated what would become essential traits of Moody's ministry. Moody was a man with great zeal and limited education who had a burden for people, especially poor children. While a proponent of middle-class sensibilities, he was also a zealous Christian worker. The Sunday School provided an early illustration of how he would manage those commitments when they conflicted.

The Sunday School also afforded Moody the opportunity to learn how to evangelize. It forced him to be brief and simple in his presentation of the gospel, traits he carried into his later ministries. The school provided a direct window into life in the slums, providing Moody an opportunity to examine urban poverty. He also observed the

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<sup>100</sup> Document entitled "1858," n. d. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>101</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to brother, June 29, 1860. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>102</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 73-4.



impact of personal conversion, and what he saw furthered his conviction. Finally, the Sunday School helped Moody define his gifts. He learned he worked best with working-class, ordinary people. His theology would reflect their concerns: it would be practical, simple and evangelistic.

#### ***d. Moody and the YMCA***

*"I believe in the Young Men's Christian Association with all my heart. It has, under God, done more in developing me for Christian work than any other agency."*<sup>103</sup>

— Dwight Moody

The Sunday School would not be the only venue where Moody would develop his evangelistic skills. Equally important to his spiritual and theological formation during his early career was the Young Men's Christian Association. The YMCA would not only provide a laboratory in which Moody could test his ministry ideas, it would also be another important institutional link into the evangelical world.

The Young Men's Christian Association began in Chicago in March 1858. Its arrival was largely the by-product of the aforementioned 1857 revival. The Association's records state that, "Out of this great revival came the Chicago Association."<sup>104</sup>

As Moody's work at the Sunday School began to expand, he also became involved with the YMCA.<sup>105</sup> In June 1860, Moody left the business world and went into full-time religious work at the YMCA. This decision demonstrated the depth of Moody's faith. Life was hard for him. The daughter of Farwell, one of his early benefactors, recounted that her father said Moody slept under the stairs in the recess of a

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<sup>103</sup>Richard C. Morse, *The History of the North American Young Men's Christian Associations* (New York: Association Press, 1918), 122.

<sup>104</sup>*Fifty-Five Years: The Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago 1858 - 1913* (Chicago: The Board of Managers, 1913), 2.

<sup>105</sup>Although this section will center on Moody's work with the Chicago YMCA, Moody's initial contact with the YMCA came in Boston in 1854. In a letter to his brother dated April 19, 1854 he wrote, "I am going to join the Christian Association to-morrow." Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 81.

small room of the YMCA.<sup>106</sup> Another early acquaintance recalled, "I often saw him in old YMCA rooms. It was here he slept on chairs covered with newspapers..."<sup>107</sup> This acquaintance also noted Moody had spent his life savings, \$7,000, on his Christian work. An 1860 letter to his mother reflected the power of his evangelistic burden. He wrote,

I was very sorry to hear of the death of Miss Cobb. Tell her father and mother that they have my sympathy and that no one can see God without [change] of heart. Oh mother, it ought to be a warning to us all. We have got to go soon. Then let us be ready. Let us keep our lam[p]s trimmed and burning for we cannot tell the day or hour that the son of man shall come. Let it be the prayer of our heart that we may live nearer our God. I have been anxious that all of my brothers and sisters meet with a change of heart for the Bible says without a change of heart no one shall see God. I am trying in my weak way to live so that when my life is finished I can go home and rest with the people of God.<sup>108</sup>

The letter also reflected a preoccupation with death that was probably tied to Moody's continued pain over the loss of his own father. It is reasonable to assume some of his zeal for evangelism was grounded in this traumatic event.

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<sup>106</sup> Paragraph named "Farwell," n. d. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>107</sup> Paragraph entitled "Dr. Robert Patterson," n. d. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>108</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to mother, September 24, 1860. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers. A similar sentiment is seen in another letter to his mother in 1862. Moody writes, "My wife will write to Warren today. We are all praying for him here. I presented him for prayer at the noon meeting yesterday and tell him hundreds of my friends are praying for him out here that he may trust God. Oh my dear mother pray with me that Warren may be converted for without a change of heart no one shall see God." D. L. Moody, letter to mother, September 13, 1862. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

The YMCA and D. L. Moody seemed destined for each other. Founded in London on June 6, 1844, the first YMCA emerged from the burden of twelve young men who purposed to improve the spiritual condition of other young men, and to arouse in them a desire to evangelize using a variety of methods. It was both interdenominational and creative.<sup>109</sup>

The leader of the twelve was George Williams. The young Williams had become acquainted with the writings of the American evangelist Charles Finney in the 1830s. Finney marked Williams deeply. As one of William's biographers put it, "[H]e adopted, he absorbed Finney's creed. To him, from the day of his conversion, to live was Christ and to bring Christ to all with whom he came in contact; in season, out of season, always, everywhere to preach Christ."<sup>110</sup>

Many of the prominent members of the community formed the initial board for the Chicago YMCA.<sup>111</sup> The Chicago YMCA was nonsectarian, evangelical and committed to "rescuing and saving these vast numbers of young men in our city from the temporal and eternal ruin to which they are exposed."<sup>112</sup> In Chicago, the influence of George Williams' initial vision in London some fourteen years earlier was apparent. Like Moody's Sunday School, the YMCA linked material and spiritual aid, and was nondenominational and evangelistically oriented. Consequently, the YMCA and the Sunday School are probably the best illustrations of the young Moody's approach to the cure of social ills.

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<sup>109</sup> The *Chicago Tribune* described the Chicago YMCA's Farwell Hall as a "modern Pantheon" where "Arminianism and Calvinism sit side by side." Quoted in Emmett Dedmon, *Great Enterprises: 100 Years of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1957), 68.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Davis Alan Raney, "In the Lord's Army: The United States Christian Commission in the Civil War" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001), 6.

<sup>111</sup> *Fifty-Five Years*, 2. Some of the members included Cyrus Bentley, W. C. Grant, B. F. Jacobs, A. L. Coe, John V. Farwell, L. L. Bond, I. N. Isham, P. L. Underwood, William H. Rand, L. Z. Leiter, H. J. Willing, Orrington Lunt, and N. S. Bouton. .

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

It was during his years at the YMCA that Moody began to learn how to be an evangelist. Given his experience and background, he seemed to be the perfect candidate for the YMCA's approach to ministry. What is more, his experience at the YMCA provided additional hands-on training for the apprentice evangelist. Moody learned how to talk to working people, and he saw their needs firsthand. As we have seen, Moody credited the YMCA years as pivotal in forming his skills as a Christian worker. Together with his time at the Sunday School, Moody's work with the YMCA honed his speaking skills, particularly to the urban working class. This helps explain his uncanny ability to connect with common people.

Both Moody and the Chicago YMCA flourished during the decade of the 1860s. The seemingly boundless energy and optimism of the young man from Northfield drove the YMCA forward. In turn, the YMCA provided a structured outlet and focused vision for his zeal. Not surprisingly, by 1866 he had risen through the ranks to become president of the Chicago YMCA.

During the years of his involvement, the YMCA engaged in a programme of evangelism as well as public relief. The 1867 annual report of the Chicago YMCA made this clear. "Earnest working Christianity is apt to be comprehensive, and to care for both soul and body. No harm ordinarily comes from doing good in both simultaneously... It was the same Jesus who first preached the gospel all day to multitudes, that then fed them miraculously."<sup>113</sup> This statement provided the pattern for Moody's approach: evangelism as the priority while simultaneously engaging in charitable work.

Under Moody's leadership, the YMCA in Chicago increased its services to the poor. In 1867, the YMCA distributed \$24,325.38 worth of bread, clothing and coal. More than 3,800 families, of which 2,300 were immigrants, received aid. True to its

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<sup>113</sup> *Fourth Annual Report, Chicago YMCA*, 9; *Advance*, 1 (November 7, 1867): 4.

task of combining evangelism and relief work, the association also passed out 42,000 copies of foreign language religious papers during the same period.<sup>114</sup>

What was true of the YMCA generally was true of Moody personally. In an 1862 letter to one of his brothers, he told of his work with the YMCA:

I am very sorry I have not answered you 3 last letters but I have so much to do I could not find time...I take care of the poore of the city. I have some 500 hundred or 800 people that are dependent on me for their daily food & new ones coming all of the time. I keep a sadall horse to ride around with to hunt up the poore people with & then keepe a nother horse & man to carry around the things with & then I have a man to waite on the folks as they come to my office. I make my headquarters at the rooms of the Young Mens Christian Association & [I have three meetings to attend each day] besides calling on the sick & that is not all [I] have to go into the countrey about every week to buy wood and provisions for the poore also coal wheet meal & corn then I have to go to hold meetings.<sup>115</sup>

Moody embraced the values of the YMCA. For Moody, urban work meant making evangelism the priority but never to the exclusion of relief work. The approach to social problems demonstrated in the 1857 revival was becoming institutionalized in the YMCA.

The Young Men's Christian Association provided the context for Moody's introduction to the Chicago business community and to John V. Farwell in particular.

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<sup>114</sup> Dedmon. See especially chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>115</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to brother Samuel, January 13, 1862, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

Farwell led a company that was one of the leading business enterprises in the United States. He had moved to Illinois from New York in 1838, at the age of thirteen. Twelve years later, in 1845, Farwell came to Chicago seeking his fortune. He began as a clerk working for several merchants selling dry goods, clothing, and home furnishings. By 1857, Farwell had worked his way into a partnership in Chicago's largest dry goods firm. The firm changed its name from Cooley, Wadsworth & Co. to Cooley, Farwell & Co. The man who would later become the icon of the Chicago business community, Marshall Field, was one of Farwell's associates in this company. By 1863, Field, like Farwell, had worked his way into the partnership; however, two years later he left to form his own company. Consequently, in 1865, John V. Farwell & Co. was born.<sup>116</sup>

In the following years, Farwell became one of the main drivers of Chicago's business machine. He understood the possibilities Chicago offered and invested accordingly. Astonishingly, by the end of the 1880s Farwell's company, along with Marshall Field's, ranked as one of the top three wholesalers in the country.<sup>117</sup>

In addition to his involvement in business, Farwell was active in politics. Like Moody, Farwell was a committed Republican. This led to Farwell serving as a presidential elector for Illinois in the elections of 1860 and 1864. President Ulysses S. Grant appointed him a commissioner for Indian Affairs in 1869.<sup>118</sup>

The other commitment Farwell shared with Moody was to evangelical Christianity. A devout Methodist, he helped build the First Methodist Church in

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<sup>116</sup> Chicago Historical Museum and the Newberry Library.

<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/2660.html> (accessed June 28, 2009).

<sup>117</sup> Texas State Historical Association. <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/FF/ffa14.html> (accessed June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009). The family also maintained the dry goods business in Chicago until 1926, when it was sold to Carson, Pirie, and Company. Farwell entered the Texas cattle-ranching scene in 1882, when, as a leading member of the Capitol Syndicate, he helped finance the building of the new Capitol in Austin. Both he and his brother Charles were directors of the Capitol Freehold Land and Investment Company, organized in London in 1885 to handle the land that became the XIT Ranch. Two towns in Texas were named for Farwell.

<sup>118</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Farwell, John Villiers," Texas State Historical Association. <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/FF/ffa14.html> (accessed June 28, 2009). His brother Charles was even more active. He helped form the Republican Party and later served in both houses of Congress.

Chicago. Farwell was also active in the YMCA movement, donating the land for its first building in Chicago. It was at the YMCA that Farwell met and became deeply impressed by young Dwight Moody. This was reflected in Farwell's annual report submitted to the board of the YMCA for the year 1861–1862. He wrote,

Brother D. L. Moody has given his entire effort and energies in executing the several plans of doing good [charitable distributions of donated food, fuel and clothing] referred to herein, and to his efforts mainly are we indebted for their practical execution. Not having raised any funds outside of membership dues, we have not been able, as an Association, to make him any remuneration... recommend his continued employment as city missionary, for which he is eminently qualified...<sup>119</sup>

Farwell became Moody's lifelong friend and benefactor. Moody counted on Farwell for financial support in his various ministries.

The YMCA was the place where Moody learned practical Christianity. It reinforced what he had started to believe at the Sunday School: serve the needs of the poor, but keep evangelism pre-eminent. The YMCA trained Moody in practical Christian work. He loved it because it had served him. Moreover, he loved it because it strategically served a place the church did not—the city.<sup>120</sup>

The YMCA years taught Moody one other vital lesson: the value of a nonsectarian approach. As the YMCA aided thousands of families and distributed tens of thousands of pieces of religious literature in foreign languages among immigrants,

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<sup>119</sup> Dedmon, 54-5, quoted in Dorsett, *Passion*, 82.

<sup>120</sup> Speaking in Liverpool in 1874, Moody said, "These young men who come to large cities want someone to take an interest in them. I contend no one can do this as well as the Christian Association." Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 221.

Moody observed firsthand what could happen when evangelicals banded together without regard for denominational prejudices. As we shall see, this is a lesson he never forgot.

***e. Moody's Chicago: Life in the City before the War***

Although the YMCA and the Sunday School movements shaped Moody, the environment of Chicago was equally important to his theological formation. Chicago was where Moody's evolving evangelical convictions ran headlong into the realities of the American city. In this blazing furnace, Moody was tempered and formed into a hardened evangelist. Evangelicalism in Chicago, both its leaders and institutions, moulded him, as we have seen. Chicago's people, neighbourhoods, institutions and events also played a key role in Moody's development. In short, no thorough understanding of the man is possible without an extended look at his adopted home.

Chicago's rise to prominence in America was nothing short of meteoric.<sup>121</sup> In 1833, the population was barely 150. As previously noted, Chicago was the second largest city in America by 1900, and also held the honour of being the fifth largest city in the world with a population of 1,698,575. Mark Twain called it,

...that astonishing Chicago—a city where they are always rubbing a lamp, and fetching a genii, and contriving and achieving new impossibilities. It is hopeless for the occasional visitor to try to keep up with Chicago—she outgrows her prophecies faster than she can make them. She is always a

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<sup>121</sup> Probably the three best studies of the history of Chicago are Bessie L. Pierce's magisterial three-volume work *A History of Chicago* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937-1957); William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); and Daniel Miller's *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). Cronon carefully details the interplay between the city and its natural environs, arguing that because of their mutual dependence they must ultimately be seen as one. Miller sees the development of Chicago as a microcosm of nineteenth-century America.



novelty; for she is never the Chicago you saw when you passed through the last time.<sup>122</sup>

To many observers Chicago was the quintessential American city. The *Saturday Review* of London called the city, “the concentrated essence of Americanism.”<sup>123</sup> In many ways, Moody and Chicago grew together. Moody reflected the raw energy of Chicago and as we have seen, it was in Chicago he became immersed in evangelicalism, honed his ministry skills and learned firsthand about urban social ills.

Many historians date the beginning of modern Chicago to 1848, a decade before the young Moody arrived.<sup>124</sup> That year the Chicago Board of Trade was established. In 1848, the first telegraph lines reached the city, the first steam powered grain elevator and cattle yard were built, the Illinois and Michigan canal was opened and the first oceangoing steamer arrived. In addition, 1848 marked the year that William Ogden began building a railroad network that would become the largest in the world by 1857. Finally, 1848 marked the arrival in Chicago of Cyrus McCormick, a man who would become known as the “Reaper King.” His reaper would transform not only farming, but also manufacturing.<sup>125</sup> McCormick’s fortune would eventually bankroll much of Moody’s work as well.

Moody arrived in Chicago in 1856. By then the industrialization of Chicago was well under way. Driven by the burgeoning rail system and Great Lakes shipping, Chicago became the hub of the pork, wheat and wood industries in America. In fact, in the case of wheat, Chicago surpassed both Archangel and Odessa as the largest grain

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<sup>122</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1901), 433.

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Miller, *City of the Century*, 188.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example Miller, *City of the Century*, 88ff. I am indebted to him for the content of this paragraph.

<sup>125</sup> McCormick, his wife and his son would become staunch supporters of Moody. They were critical in the financing of his ministries in Chicago.

port in the world.<sup>126</sup> Not surprisingly, this rapid expansion opened a Pandora's Box of urban ills and provided the context for much of Moody's work in the Sunday School and the YMCA. Plagued by overcrowding and poor sanitation, Chicago suffered waves of epidemics. One historian describes the city as filled with areas of "noisome quagmires" where human waste often spilled into drinking wells. Garbage was strewn in roadside ditches. Plank streets and sidewalks crisscrossed over piles of garbage and human and animal waste. The Chicago River was the dumping ground for various manufacturing wastes, including the runoff from tanneries, packing plants, distilleries and glue factories. William McCormick wrote to his brother and described the river as "positively red with blood under the Rush Street bridge and down past our factory." He concluded, "What a pestilence may result from it I don't know."<sup>127</sup> William McCormick's last comment proved prophetic. Typhoid and dysentery took such a toll that many believed Chicago had the highest death rate per capita of any city in the country. It is very likely Moody lost some of his students in these waves of disease.

Added to this ghastly elixir was an exceptionally high rate of drunkenness. Chicago had one saloon for every two hundred residents and its second largest industry was liquor distilling.<sup>128</sup> Given these facts, it seems fitting that the Women's Christian Temperance Union chose Chicago as the site for its headquarters.<sup>129</sup>

The saloons also played an important social role for immigrants. They often functioned as banks, cashing checks and making loans. At other times, the local barkeeper played the role of pharmacist, mixing various homespun remedies designed

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<sup>126</sup> For details, see Miller, *City of the Century*, 114 – 117; Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 173, 229-30; and Lloyd Lewis and Henry J. Smith, *Chicago: The History of Its Reputation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929), 137-38. Two of the most prominent leaders in the pork industry were Philip Armour and Gustavus Swift. Both supported Moody's ministries financially.

<sup>127</sup> Miller, *City of the Century*, 123, 427.

<sup>128</sup> Miller, *City of the Century*, 191, 446-47.

<sup>129</sup> The founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was Frances Willard. She was an early associate of Moody who worked with him on his 1877 campaign in Boston. For more details, see Dorsett, *Passion for Souls*, 252-254.

to alleviate the various ailments of their clientele. The saloon functioned as post office or the place for social gatherings. In many of the immigrant communities, up to three quarters of the population was illiterate. For those workers, the saloon served as a newspaper. These multiple functions help explain the large number of saloons spread throughout Chicago's slums.<sup>130</sup>

As we have seen, Moody's early ministries targeted the slums of Chicago. Although the Temperance movement was strong in Northfield during Moody's childhood, he had never experienced the degree of degradation wrought by alcoholism that he saw in Chicago. If the stories of his father's alcoholism are true, Moody had already formulated a tie between poverty and drunkenness. What he saw in large scale in Chicago's slums strengthened his conviction that alcohol and poverty were linked.<sup>131</sup>

In addition to housing and health issues, working people often toiled in appalling conditions. The meat packing industry served as a microcosm of deplorable working conditions that had become widespread. Frederick Law Olmstead described the scene in a Cincinnati pork packing plant that was typical of the plants of the day. The plant was a sort of "human chopping-machine where the hogs were converted into commercial pork." The speed at which the hogs were dispatched was amazing. Olmstead remarked, "We took out our watches and counted thirty-five seconds, from the moment one hog touched the table until the next occupied its place."<sup>132</sup> This disassembly line did not require skilled labour, reducing the men to interchangeable pieces who were easily replaced.<sup>133</sup> Although this was far from the only cause, it does help explain the rising labor unrest in the years up to the Civil War.

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<sup>130</sup> Miller, *City of the Century*, 191, 446-47.

<sup>131</sup> This will be fully explored in the chapter on Moody's social vision.

<sup>132</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas, or A Saddle Trip on the Southwestern Frontier* (New York, NY: Edwards & sons co., 1857; reprint 1978), 9.

<sup>133</sup> Miller, *City of the Century*, 204-5. Miller noted Henry Ford modelled his assembly line on the packers' plants in Chicago.

In addition to living conditions and labor issues, Moody faced other challenges. Paralleling the rise in industrialization and labour movements was the rise of the Roman Catholic population in Chicago.<sup>134</sup> Largely because of immigrants from Ireland, Germany and French Canada, the Catholic population experienced a period of strong growth between 1833 and 1880.<sup>135</sup>

As previously noted, strong anti-Catholic sentiment permeated the country and Chicago proved to share this sentiment.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, as the Roman Catholic portion of the populace swelled, the anti-Catholic sentiment increased accordingly. In September 1853 the *Chicago Tribune* pointed out to its readers that the Pope had placed the United States under the protection of the Virgin Mary and warned of Catholic intrusion, due to the increased size of the Catholic population.<sup>137</sup>

A later article, from October of that year, painted the Catholic Church as the “enemy of the Gospel and the best interests of man,” stating that Catholic doctrine was “inimical to our Republic... they are like oil and water, they cannot amalgamate, and one must obtain the ascendancy over the other.”<sup>138</sup> The attack continued in November, with the paper arguing that the pledge of loyalty taken by all bishops to the Pope was in

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<sup>134</sup> Charles Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981). This is the best study on Roman Catholicism in Chicago of which I am aware. See also Joseph Parot, *Polish Catholics in Chicago, 1850-1920* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1981); and Joseph Cada, *Czech-American Catholics, 1850-1920* (Lisle, IL: Benedictine Abbey Press, 1964).

<sup>135</sup> Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics*, 234. In fact, by 1890 the city's Catholics outnumbered its Protestants more than 2-to-1 and made Chicago the largest Catholic centre in the Midwest, second only to New York City in the country. Bruce C. Nelson, “Revival and Upheaval: Religion, Irreligion, and Chicago's Working Class in 1886,” *Journal of Social History*, 25, no. 2 (Winter, 1991): 233.

<sup>136</sup> Protestants formed societies to respond to the perceived Catholic threat. Two of the most notable were the American Protective Association and the American Patriotic League. For additional studies, see John Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829-1860* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991); Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992); E. R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (New York, NY: Barnes and Noble, 1968); and Ray Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860* (New York, NY: Peter Smith Publishers, 1938).

<sup>137</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, September, 16, 1853.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, October, 18 and 21, 1853.

essence an oath of allegiance to a foreign authority and therefore the bishops were not free to be true Americans.<sup>139</sup>

As the proportion of Roman Catholics increased, the attacks mounted. Public schools became a lightning rod for much of the anti-Catholic sentiment. Protestants had long regarded public education as critical in spreading knowledge of the Bible. As Winthrop Hudson puts it, “the little red schoolhouse was regarded, along with motherhood and the home, as one of the most cherished institutions of American life.”<sup>140</sup> Increasingly, Protestants came to believe Roman Catholics were a threat to public education in Chicago. Specifically, the Bible’s role in public schools was a point of conflict between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The reading of the Bible in Chicago schools had ended in 1864. Outraged Protestants believed the removal of the Bible was the result of collusion between the Democratic mayor and the city’s Roman Catholic clergy. Both the Presbyterians and the Baptists used their denominational publications to sound the alarm, declaring that this act could lead to the ultimate destruction of the country.<sup>141</sup>

Obviously, anti-Catholicism was a major part of Moody’s experience in Chicago. He certainly knew of the increase in the Catholic population and the resulting hysteria among some Protestants. However, Moody never joined with other Protestant voices decrying Catholicism. In fact, he sometimes faced criticism from other Protestants for his work with Catholics, and likewise faced some animosity from the Catholic community.<sup>142</sup> Nonetheless, he doggedly persisted in his work among the masses in Chicago and maintained cordial relations with Roman Catholic communities.

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., November 5, 1853.

<sup>140</sup> Winthrop Hudson, *Religion in America*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1965), 245.

<sup>141</sup> For examples, see *Interior*, 7 (February 17, 1876): 1; and William C. Conant, “The Bible and The State,” *Baptist Quarterly*, 5 (July, 1871): 284.

<sup>142</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 227. Moody also describes animosity from Roman Catholic families during the early days of the Sunday School. He persisted despite their “contempt” and eventually won them over. Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 66. In the next chapter, additional instances of Moody’s work with and attitude toward Roman Catholics will be cited.

In short, it was in Chicago that Moody constructed a kind of evangelicalism devoid of anti-Catholicism.<sup>143</sup>

Somewhat paradoxically, social ills kept Moody in the city. These uniquely urban challenges energized his ministries. As he put it, "Water runs downhill, and the highest hills are the great cities. If we can stir them, we can stir the whole nation."<sup>144</sup> While in England, he talked of the impact cities had on young men,

Since I have come to Liverpool, there is hardly a night in that walking from this hall to my hotel I do not meet a number of young men reeling through the streets. They may not be your sons, but bear in mind, my friend, they are somebody's sons. They are worth saving.<sup>145</sup>

Moody, like many others, saw that the future of America would be urban. He also saw the potential for evil the city possessed. He came to understand that the city was the key to any ministry if it was to have a significant impact on society. While the city drew Moody as a young man, as he moved into middle age, it held no such appeal. In fact, ministry alone increasingly drove his time in cities. As he put it, "The city is no place for me. If it was not for the work I am called to do, I would never show my head in this city or any other again."<sup>146</sup> From Moody's perspective, the cities were simply too vital to ignore.

### **C. Conclusion**

By the eve of the Civil War, the initial phase of Dwight Moody's theological formation was complete. Reared in a Unitarian Church in rural New England, he had

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<sup>143</sup> This part will be developed in the next chapter.

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 263. His close associate, Henry Drummond, echoed Moody's call in an 1893 work entitled *The City Without a Church*. In the work, Drummond argues that world redemption is dependent on urban Christianization.

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 221.

<sup>146</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 530.

moved to Boston and become an evangelical. He observed the revivalism of Edwin Kirk but it was not until the years in Chicago he began to absorb it. It was also in Chicago where he saw evangelicalism at work, both in his life and the lives of others. He became part of some of evangelicalism's most important institutions and took part in one of its seminal events, the Revival of 1857–1858. By this point in his life, Moody was a committed evangelical; all that remained was for these commitments to be deepened and refined. The Civil War and the decade that followed would provide the experiences and relationships necessary for that to happen.

Moody also began to bring his evangelicalism to bear on the rapidly industrializing and growing city of Chicago. It was there that Moody first witnessed urban poverty. He began developing responses to that poverty, responses that emphasized the priority of evangelism and encouraged interdenominational cooperation. Moody could judge for himself the effectiveness of churches, Sunday Schools and Temperance Unions. He was free to try some of his own strategies, applying what he had experienced and what he had seen and learned from others. The coming Civil War would provide a new set of opportunities and experiences for him. In the years after the War, Moody would be exposed to evangelicals from the United Kingdom, individuals who would provide new insights into dealing with urban social ills. However, these early lessons—the power of conversion and personal charity, the need to love people and meet them in their contexts, the importance of talking to them in a way they could understand—became Moody's foundational principles. He had picked them up in Northfield, Boston and Chicago. They had been tested at the YMCA and Sunday School, and they would remain the bedrock principles of his ministry throughout his life.

### **III. THE FORMATION OF MOODY'S THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL VISION: FROM THE CIVIL WAR UNTIL 1873**

Until the outbreak of the American Civil War, Northfield and Chicago had dominated Moody's life. With the outbreak of the war, he would be exposed to the broader American evangelical community. Further, Moody saw the devastation of the American Civil War and felt its trauma. While these experiences reinforced what Moody had observed in Chicago, they also exposed him to new ideas, movements and personalities that brought other perspectives to his theology.

However, the war would play only one part in this phase of Moody's life. The evangelical community in the United Kingdom played a prominent role as well. Moody was familiar with George Mueller and Charles Spurgeon because of some of the reading he had done at the urging of J. B Stillson, a Presbyterian layperson he had met early after his arrival in Chicago. In the years after the Civil War, Moody would make several trips to the United Kingdom and build personal relationships with not only Mueller and Spurgeon, but many other luminaries of the evangelical world. These individuals would also profoundly shape Moody's theology.

As in the previous chapter, the goal of this chapter is to explore the various movements, events and persons that were part of Moody's world. Moreover, as before, this will be done with an eye to showing how Moody came to his theological convictions. The chapter will be limited to those events or individuals that came into Moody's life after the American Civil War and before 1873. The influence of these events, movements or individuals may be traced beyond 1873.

Finally, it must be reiterated that Moody rarely indicated how he came to his theological convictions. We know he did little reading and most of his understanding of doctrine and practice came from observation and personal conversation. In other words,



most of his theology was caught, not taught. Therefore, the chapter will again focus on the three most critical factors in the formation of Moody's theology: his life experiences, what he observed in his environment and his personal relationships with people he valued and admired.

### **A. Moody and the Civil War**

Moody was deeply involved in the American Civil War. As previously mentioned, he made no fewer than nine trips to the battlefield to minister to Union troops. These trips would span the length of the war, from 1862 to 1865. In fact, Moody and his wife would be with General Grant as he entered the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, at the end of the war. He also worked with Southern prisoners.

As we will see shortly, what Moody witnessed firsthand was dreadful. The human cost of the conflict was staggering. At least 618,000 Americans died in the Civil War, and some experts say the toll reached 700,000. To put these figures in context, these casualties exceed the nation's loss in all its other wars from the Revolution to Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the cost in human life, the war took a terrible economic toll as well. The best estimates indicate that the War cost about 6.7 billion dollars. This amounted to roughly four times the total government expenditures from 1789 through 1860. Using inflation-adjusted figures for 1990, the per capita cost for the North was \$1,042 while the South's was \$2,111. These figures are based on direct costs and do not

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<sup>1</sup> Burke Davis, "The Civil War, Strange and Fascinating Facts," (November 1, 2004), Civil War Potpourri, <http://web.archive.org/web/20050828141449/www.civilwarhome.com/casualties.htm> (accessed July 10, 2009). Detailed studies of Union and Confederate military casualties are found in Thomas L. Livermore, *Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America 1861-65* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1901) and William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865* (Albany, N.Y.: Albany Publishing Co., 1889).

reflect pension expenses and damage to infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> Infrastructure damage, especially in the South, was enormous: burned or plundered homes, pillaged countryside, untold losses in crops and farm animals, ruined buildings and bridges, devastated college campuses and neglected roads and train tracks all left the South in ruins.<sup>3</sup>

It was through Moody's association with the YMCA that he was brought into contact with the War. Reflecting its commitment to ministering to young men, the YMCA established the Christian Commission in early September 1862, and called for "volunteers or delegates [who] were willing to serve in any capacity to bring spiritual or physical comfort to Union or Confederate soldiers."<sup>4</sup> As the first historian of the Commission put it, "...from the beginning the army was recognized as a field for evangelistic effort."<sup>5</sup>

The average delegate, who was in his teens, would leave a YMCA headquarters with a badge and a shouldered blanket; dried food and medical supplies for wounded soldiers; a bucket for water, coffee, or stimulants; and a Bible for religious work and for use in the burial of the dead. Delegates' activities included passing out Bibles, hymnbooks and tracts; holding prayer meetings; helping write letters or delivering letters from home; purchasing items forgotten by the soldiers; cooking homemade meals and delivering emergency rations. Often during and after battles, they assisted surgeons by changing bandages or bathing wounds.<sup>6</sup> During the course of the war,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uspoliticsonline.com/archives/warcost.htm> (accessed July 10, 2009); and [http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/EB/alston/econ4524/lecture\\_5%20-cost%20of%20the%20civil%20war.pdf](http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/EB/alston/econ4524/lecture_5%20-cost%20of%20the%20civil%20war.pdf) (accessed July 10, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> For a complete collection of statistics related to the American Civil War see, Patricia L. Faust and Norman C. Delaney, eds., *Historical Times Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> Centennial Brochure, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, April 7, 2007. Elsewhere the purpose is described as seeking "the spiritual good of the soldiers . . . and incidentally their intellectual improvement and social and physical comfort." Lemuel Moss, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1886), 107.

<sup>5</sup> Moss, *Annals*, 81.

<sup>6</sup> Centennial Brochure.

nearly 5,000 delegates volunteered to serve without pay, and they distributed an estimated 2.5 million pieces of literature, preached almost 50,000 sermons, and held over 75,000 prayer meetings.<sup>7</sup> Farwell was named the head of the Christian Commission in Illinois and the first delegate commissioned nationally was Dwight Moody.

A Union training camp just south of Chicago, Camp Douglas, was Moody's first assignment with the Commission. He immediately threw himself into working among the recruits. Moody launched a series of religious meetings at the camp. The meetings quickly became popular and well attended. They escalated to the point that eight to ten different meetings were being held every twenty-four hours.<sup>8</sup> Within weeks, Moody had overseen the printing and distribution of 3,500 Union Sunday School hymnals. Thousands of Bibles and other pieces of religious literature were disseminated as well. Still unsatisfied, Moody decided each regiment in the camp should have its own Christian Commission tent. In addition to being stocked with religious literature, each tent contained writing materials to encourage the men to write home. By the end of the conflict, over 1,500 religious services had been held at the camp.<sup>9</sup>

After his initial work at the camp, Moody began making trips to the front. At least one of his early trips was to the Battle of Shiloh in 1862. Shiloh was one of the bloodiest battles of the early years of the war; in fact, it was perhaps the costliest in U.S. history up to that time.<sup>10</sup> The images Moody saw on the battlefield were burned into his mind. Writing to his mother after another battle, he lamented,

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<sup>7</sup> Moss, "Table V – Summary of Labors and Distributions," *Annals*, 729.

<sup>8</sup> Moss, *Annals*, 38.

<sup>9</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 88-89.

<sup>10</sup> The final number of dead or missing was 13,000 on the Union side and 10,500 on the Confederate side. The total casualty count of 23,500 was more than the American casualties of the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War combined. This brief description of the aftermath of the battle provides a sense of the horror: "That night the dead lay everywhere. Neither army had developed a system for gathering the dead. General Grant said, 'a person can walk in any given direction without stepping on ground.' In a Confederate camp that night one soldier said, 'You can hear the screams of the 100

I am at Cairo with things to relieve the wants of the sick & wounded soldiers. I was sent to Fort Donelson Tenn—last week & as soon as I got hom they sent me back with 7 or 8 hundred dollars worth of things for the wounded. One hospital has about 1400 hundred another 800 etc. I tell you mother as I was going through the hospitals today I remarked to a lady that was with me if I was going to be sick I would want to be home for there is nothing like home. Who could take so good care of me as you could? The sympathy goes a great ways too, I tell you, you do not know how roughly the poor fellows are treated. Our army are very healthy as a general thing. Some sickness among them, not much. I was on the battlefield before they had buried the dead. It was awful to see the dead lying around without being anyone to bury them. They are buried now. The prisoners are up to Chicago, a good many of them. So we have meetings with them daily.<sup>11</sup>

Another time he recalled, “I could hear the groans of dying men, and I helped bear away some of the wounded, and I saw the scene in all its terrible reality.”<sup>12</sup>

If the horror of the battlefield were not enough, Moody worked at a Union prisoner of war camp as well. As the war progressed, both sides had collected thousands of prisoners of war. Since neither side expected a long conflict, they were not prepared

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injured. They screamed for water, God heard them for the heavens opened and the rain fell.’ Flashes of lightening showed vultures feeding on the ungathered dead.” “The Battle of Shiloh,” <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/1257/shiloh.html> (accessed July 10, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to mother, March 4, 1862, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 100. In another letter to his mother dated February 4, 1863, Moody writes of attending to the sick and wounded of Rosencrans’ Army. Rosencrans’ Union forces were defeated at the battles of Murfreesboro and Chickamauga in Tennessee and Georgia. D. L. Moody, letter to mother, February 4, 1863, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

to deal with the large number of prisoners. Camp Douglas was hastily converted into a prisoner of war camp beginning in February 1862 (note Moody's comment about prisoners sent to Chicago in the above letter).<sup>13</sup> The haste of the process is illustrated by the fact that, for a period of time, the camp housed both Union recruits and Confederate prisoners. A letter from Moody's brother Sam illustrates this, as well as giving us a glimpse of Moody's work during the transition days at the camp.

Dwight is run from morning to night. He hardly gets time to eat.

Camp Douglas is situated here (there is bout 17,000) he holds meetings down there most every night. It is a treat to go down there and hear the soldiers sing which is about 300 or 400 gathered as they come from most every state. The Rebel are among them.<sup>14</sup>

Writing the same day to his mother, Moody said, "I have been trying for a long time to find time to write you but so many things to do and so few to do them. I am drove from piler to post. I wish I had time to write you my feelings but I must go to Camp Douglas now."<sup>15</sup>

Despite the availability of resources, conditions at the camp quickly degenerated, so that within one year the monthly mortality rate was at ten percent, a rate unsurpassed by any other prison in the North or South.<sup>16</sup> At its worst, estimates for the mortality rate range from twenty to thirty percent, establishing Camp Douglas's

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<sup>13</sup> The definitive study on Camp Douglas is George Levy's *To Die in Chicago: Confederate Prisoners at Camp Douglas 1862-65* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Moody, letter to the folks at Clinton, October 24, 1862, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>15</sup> D. L. Moody, letter home, October 24, 1862, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>16</sup> *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion*, 3 Vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), 1, Part I: 46. Quoted in Levy, 334.

reputation as an extermination camp. This makes the mortality rate at Camp Douglas comparable to the rate at the notorious Confederate camp, Andersonville.

Three traits distinguished Camp Douglas from other Northern prison camps: extreme acts of cruelty, high mortality rates and a low official count of prisoners who died. Although the official count was around 4,000 deaths, others put the number as high as 6,129. Many men died of exposure, scurvy and smallpox.<sup>17</sup>

It is hard to measure the effect the War had on Moody. His son William in his biography noted that "the record of these years is fragmentary."<sup>18</sup> The few letters available from this time provide only a brief glance into his psyche.<sup>19</sup> Certainly, though, anyone exposed to this amount of gore and inhumane behavior could not walk away unscathed. One reasonable assumption is that these experiences soured him on human nature and the progress of human civilization. The War, combined with the urban ills of Chicago and Boston, predisposed him to a more dubious view of humanity and society. What he had been taught about human sinfulness by Edward Kirk and others seemed to be confirmed by what he observed on the battlefield and in the prison camp. Further, it is hardly surprising that shortly after the War's end, Moody became an enthusiastic proponent of premillennialism.

The Civil War would also bring an important man into Moody's life, General Oliver Otis Howard. He was born in Maine in 1830, and was educated at Bowdoin College (1850) and the U.S. Military Academy (1854). Upon leaving West Point, he served in the Seminole War in Florida. While in Florida, he underwent a profound

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<sup>17</sup> Details are found throughout Levy's book.

<sup>18</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 89, 91.

<sup>19</sup> There is some evidence from later in his life. As the United States moved towards war with Spain, he remarked, "'War, awful war! Never has our country had more need of your prayers than at the present time. God keep us from war, if it be possible, and God keep hate of Spain out of our hearts! I have not met a man who served in the last war who wants to see another. God knows that I do not want to see the carnage and destruction that such a war would bring. God pity America and Spain. There are many mothers who will be bereaved, many homes broken up, if we have war. Have you thought of this?'" Quoted in Chapman, *Life and Work*, 189.

religious conversion after attending a Methodist tent meeting. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Howard joined the Union Army, eventually rising to the rank of Major General.<sup>20</sup> General O. O. Howard met Dwight Moody in 1864. Moody was leading a meeting among Union troops and Howard's troops were assigned to the encampment Moody was serving.<sup>21</sup> As Howard recalled it, Moody's "preaching was direct and effective..."<sup>22</sup> Consequently Howard joined Moody in leading services among the men for a few days before they went into action.

In many ways, General Howard was a social reformer: he believed in temperance, racial equality and education for women. Throughout the war, Howard earned a reputation as a committed and zealous Christian, often demanding his men attend prayer meetings and temperance gatherings. Howard taught Sunday School and was an enthusiastic supporter of the YMCA.<sup>23</sup> He also sparked controversy by showing kindness to defeated Southern troops and citizenry, often meting out severe punishment to any of his troops engaged in looting or wanton destruction of property.<sup>24</sup> Throughout their days together during the Civil War, Howard served to reinforce what Moody had heard and seen during his days in Boston at Edward Kirk's church. Moreover, by his zeal for evangelism and concern for the physical needs of others, Howard reinforced the lessons Moody had learned through the Sunday School and YMCA in Chicago.

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<sup>20</sup> The Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, <http://www.ochcom.org/howard> (accessed July 10, 2009). The bulk of the biographical material about Howard in the next several paragraphs comes from this source.

<sup>21</sup> Here is how Howard described the meeting: "It was the middle of April, 1864. I was bringing together my Fourth Army Corps. Two divisions had already arrived, and were encamped in and near the village. Moody was then fresh and hearty, full of enthusiasm for the Master's work. Our soldiers were just about to set out on what we all felt promised a hard and bloody campaign, and I think were especially desirous of strong preaching. Crowds and crowds turned out to hear the glad tidings from Moody's lips. He showed them how a soldier would give his heart to God. His preaching was direct and effective, and multitudes responded with a confession and promise to follow Christ." Quoted in John McDowell, et. al., *What D. L. Moody Means to Me* (East Northfield: Northfield Schools, 1937), 24.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in McDowell, 24.

<sup>23</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 111-13.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

Howard was also a forward thinker on racial questions. As he put it, "I never could detect the shadow of a reason why the color of the skin should impair the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."<sup>25</sup> Howard lived out his convictions. For example, Howard believed all Indian wives taken by soldiers in the West were legitimate in the eyes of God, and when soldiers abandoned them to return East and marry white women, they were committing bigamy. Howard also invited African-American children to join the Sunday School in his Washington, D.C., church, resulting in a church split. Howard's views often brought him into conflict with his colleagues in the Union Army. As his biographer put it, "The anomaly of Howard's position as advocate of racial equality and as a high-ranking officer in the United States Army had proved so impossible of comprehension that more than one person, and often this meant a fellow officer, simply never understood him at all."<sup>26</sup>

Near the end of the war, Abraham Lincoln selected Howard to lead the Freedmen's Bureau. After the War, President Andrew Johnson confirmed Howard's role with the Bureau. Central to Howard's vision for helping the newly freed slaves was education. Howard wrote, "The burden of my efforts...may be condensed into the words: Educate the children. That was the relief needed. Is it not always the relief which in time becomes a permanency?"<sup>27</sup> In his report to the Secretary of War in 1869, he wrote, "But the most urgent want of the freedmen was education; and from the first I have devoted more attention to this than any other branch of my work."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Oliver Otis Howard, circa 1865, quoted in Anne Richardson, "Oliver Otis Howard - General in the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Indian Wars," The Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission Web Site, 2002, <http://www.ochcom.org/howard> (accessed July 12, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> John A. Carpenter, *The Sword and the Olive Branch: Oliver Otis Howard* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 288.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Richardson, <http://www.ochcom.org/howard> (accessed July, 12, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Oliver Otis Howard, *Report of the Report of Brevet Major General O. O. Howard, Commissioner Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, to the Secretary of War: October 20, 1869* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1869), 11.



Howard believed education was a critical component in addressing poverty. Speaking in 1866, he opined, "The only way to lift the ponderous load of poverty from the houses of poor whites and blacks, and keep it lifted is by instruction."<sup>29</sup> Howard pushed not only for male education, but for the education of females of all races as well.<sup>30</sup>

For various reasons, 1872 brought the dismantling of the Freedmen's Bureau. During his tenure at the helm, Howard had used Bureau monies to establish thousands of various types of schools.<sup>31</sup> The most notable was Howard University, which was the brainchild of a missionary society meeting Howard attended on November 20, 1867. Initially envisioned as a school to train pastors, the goal was quickly broadened to include lawyers, teachers, doctors and dentists.<sup>32</sup> Howard became the president of the university, and it was named in his honor.

While Howard saw education as a means to address poverty, his motive was religious. Speaking on his work at the Freedmen's Bureau in 1866, he made this clear. Howard proclaimed he was taking love as his motto. He argued that only love could restore the country, rebuild communities and bring back together families. Love was "the fundamental law; it is the very bottom of a true reconstruction." Moreover, in Howard's definition, this love was Christian. "The fundamental truth of the whole Gospel is love," he said. "This fundamental truth requires us to love one another."

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<sup>29</sup> Oliver Otis Howard, *Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard, Major General, United States Army* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1908), 2: 329.

<sup>30</sup> For example, he was one of the founders and served as the first president of Howard University. While clearly the intent of the founders was to uplift African-Americans, especially those recently freed from slavery, the university was established on the principle that it would be open to all races and colours, both sexes, and all social classes. Sterling M. Lloyd, Jr., "A Short History of the Howard University College of Medicine" (May 2006), <http://www.med.howard.edu/nuHoward/history.html> (accessed July 13, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Howard, *Report*, 12.

<sup>32</sup> Lloyd, "Short History" <http://www.med.howard.edu/nuHoward/history.html> (accessed July 13, 2009).

Howard believed that the practical spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ was love, and that just such a spirit was “required in this country.”<sup>33</sup>

Moody’s relationship with Howard continued after the War, and Moody called on Howard to speak at YMCA and Sunday School conventions and at various revivals. He also asked Howard to speak at his schools in Northfield and Chicago. William Moody’s biography declared Moody maintained a lifetime intimacy with Howard, and Dorsett described them as close friends.<sup>34</sup>

Moody was shaped by the character traits he saw in Howard. Howard was an older man who acted on his convictions. His peers respected him. Both Generals Grant and Sherman trusted him and gave him significant responsibility on their staff. He had served as Superintendent at West Point, and he had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery in combat.<sup>35</sup> Howard’s actions reinforced Moody’s evangelical convictions, especially his enthusiasm for evangelism and temperance. It is also likely that Howard influenced Moody’s convictions concerning education. It hardly seems coincidental that Moody’s first school was for women and that all his schools were multiracial. Indeed, Dorsett claimed that Howard taught Moody much about how to lead an educational institution, and instructed him on the complicated and delicate issues of race in the United States.<sup>36</sup> By linking education to Christian charity, Howard echoed what Moody had seen in his first pastor at Northfield, Oliver Everett.

By the advent of Moody’s first trip to the United Kingdom in 1867, a number of the elements that would shape his social vision were already in place. As a boy, he had learned about God’s love and what Christian charity could do to help those in need. As a young man, he had experienced a conversion, been nurtured in the revivalist

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<sup>33</sup> Howard, *Autobiography*, 2: 324

<sup>34</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 91; and Dorsett, *Passion*, 114.

<sup>35</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 111; and Richardson, <http://www.ochcom.org/howard> (accessed July 13, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 115.

evangelical tradition and served in institutions where he had learned to balance evangelism and charity. The deplorable conditions of the slums of Chicago and the carnage of the Civil War tempered Moody. He had begun forming relationships with the business community in Chicago from whom he would draw financial support. Now, as a young adult he would interact with a number of the evangelical giants of the United Kingdom.

#### **B. The 1867 trip to the United Kingdom: its impact and lingering influence**

*"I want to tell you how thankful I am forever going to London; it seems to me that I was almost in darkness until I went over there. I have enjoyed myself much more in Christ since I got back. I would not take anything for what I learnt while in your city. I love the dear friends in London more than I can express with this pen, and my heart goes out to you all very much."*

—Dwight Moody to R. C. Morgan, July 1867<sup>37</sup>

Although scholars often overlook this trip, Moody's first trip to the United Kingdom proved pivotal in forming his theology and social vision. During this trip, evangelicals in the United Kingdom reinforced many of Moody's developing ideas about theology and social action. Some of these figures were people whom Moody already admired. Others were individuals he would come to admire.

As noted earlier, the trip was occasioned by exhaustion on the part of Moody and his wife, Emma. The couple had been married in 1862. Although theirs appears to have been an excellent marriage, the new couple also seems to have had little time together. If anything, being husband and wife seems to have led to a redoubling of their efforts in ministry. Emma's own diary reflected this, "D. L. Moody and Emma C.

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in George E. Morgan, *Mighty Days of Revival; R. C. Morgan: His Life and Times* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1922), footnote 2, 70-71.

Revell married on August 28, 1862. D. L. busy with his work among the soldiers.”<sup>38</sup> We have already noted Moody’s work in Chicago and his heavy involvement with the Civil War. On top of this, the couple had their first child, Emma, in October 1864. Mrs. Moody’s recovery from the birth was slow and yet, within six months of the birth, Emma would leave the baby at home and join Dwight with General Grant’s army during the final stages of the Civil War. Shortly after returning from the front, the Moodys received news that Emma’s father had died. The death was unexpected and dealt a blow to the couple. In a letter to Dwight’s mother, Emma expressed her grief.

I suppose Mr. M has written to you of father’s death. I have felt so sad I could not write before. It was so dreadful. I had hoped so much that I might see him living and it was so hard when coming to the house to see the [black] crepe on the door. At the funeral it seemed hard to bear but it has been so much harder since. Father was so afraid of spoiling my pleasure that tho he wanted to see me so much he would not send for me till the doctor said “there was no hope.” He told mother he knew he should not see me here but he should in Heaven. He told her to tell me he would like to have seen me but he loved me and wanted me to meet him in heaven. Father’s last words were, “Perfect Peace.” I have thought of the passage when my trial seemed so hard to bear, “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” I know He does and yet I cannot help thinking of father. It is my first great trial.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 44.

<sup>39</sup> Emma Moody, letter to Mother, June 18, 1866, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

In addition, by Christmas of 1866, Emma's health had taken a turn for the worse with the development of some sort of respiratory ailment.

Moody was struggling as well, and beginning to show severe signs of burnout. He was struggling with forgetfulness and bouts of anger, at one point pushing a heckler down a short flight of stairs. He lost track of his schedule and at times doubled-booked himself. Moody's fragile state was obvious to his friends as well. Major Whittle had met Moody during the Civil War. He would become a fast friend and a coworker in a number of Moody's revivals. Whittle observed Moody's state of mind and commented in his diary, "He had become mixed up with building Farwell Hall and was on committees for every kind of work and in his ambition to make his enterprises succeed because they were his, had taken his eyes off the Lord . . ."<sup>40</sup>

Although neither Dwight nor Emma mentioned it, both must have been affected by the years of slaughter they had seen during the Civil War.<sup>41</sup> It is hard to believe both were not deeply traumatized.

Stressed by Emma's health, Moody's workload and the residual effect of the War, the couple heeded the advice of Emma's doctor to take a trip. The physician had prescribed rest and ocean air for her continued respiratory ills. A trip to the United Kingdom would provide not only ocean air and time away; it would give Emma a chance to visit some of her extended family. For Dwight, the trip also held potential meetings with a number of men he had come to admire, including George Mueller, George Williams and Charles Spurgeon. Consequently, baby Emma was left with Grandma Revel, and the couple set sail in the fall of 1867.

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Findlay, 132. Whittle's diary is in the Library of Congress.

<sup>41</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 89. Emma's exposure to Civil War battlefields is unclear. As I noted earlier, we know for certain she went with Grant into Richmond. According to William's biography, Moody talks of taking Emma with him to Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama. However, there is no confirmation of this happening. Regardless, the devastation she would have seen in Richmond would have been traumatic enough.

In all, Moody would spend four months in the United Kingdom. He spent most of the time connecting with other evangelicals. There were natural ties with the YMCA that Moody strengthened and leveraged. In addition, he observed Sunday Schools, prayer meetings and various other ministries eager to exchange ideas.

### 1. George Mueller and Henry Moorhouse

Shortly after Moody arrived in Chicago, J. B. Stillson, a devoted Christian businessperson, introduced Moody to the writings of George Mueller. Stillson came alongside Moody and began intentionally sharpening the desire for ministry that he saw in this young businessperson's life. W. H. Daniels wrote that Stillson was greatly impressed by Moody's passion, but believed that his passion lacked direction and depth. Stillson saw Moody as "a young man of earnest purpose, plain habits, and not very much education."<sup>42</sup> In the late 1850s, Stillson told Moody, "If you want to draw wine out of a cask, it is needed first to put some in. You are all the time talking, and you ought to begin to study."<sup>43</sup> Moody concurred and Stillson "proceeded to mark out for him a course of reading, intending to assist him in enlarging his education."<sup>44</sup> Among the books selected was Mueller's autobiography *A Life of Trust*.<sup>45</sup> Eventually, business took Stillson away from Chicago and, in the somewhat comical words of Daniels, "Thus did Moody escape becoming a bookish man."<sup>46</sup> While he may have escaped becoming "bookish," Moody was left with what his son Paul describes as, "an earnest desire to hear and meet [...] Mueller."<sup>47</sup> Moody's goal was to "imbibe a heady draught of Mueller's faith."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Paul Moody, *My Father*, 27.

<sup>43</sup> Daniels, *D. L. Moody*, 54.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Moody, *My Father*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Roger Steer, *George Muller: Delighted in God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), 238.

George Mueller was born September 27, 1805, in Kroppenstadt, Prussia, near modern day Halberstat, Germany.<sup>49</sup> He was educated at the University of Halle, the heart of German Pietism. While at Halle, Mueller underwent a religious conversion and decided to pursue a career in foreign missions. However, the Berlin Missionary Society rejected him. Consequently Mueller moved to England and, in 1829, illness prompted a trip to Devon to recuperate. In Devon, Mueller was introduced to the fledgling Plymouth Brethren movement. Subsequently, he was appointed to pastor a small chapel in Teignmouth. During this pastorate, Mueller began practising a radical kind of faith, choosing to forego his salary and rely on God alone to provide for his needs. In his autobiography, Mueller had expressed that he “began to have conscientious objections against any longer receiving a stated salary.”<sup>50</sup> Although he had several reasons, one of his primary reasons came out of James 2:1–6. Since it was the general practice of the day to provide for a minister’s salary through pew-rents, Mueller rejected the notion on the grounds such a practice was “against the mind of the Lord, as in general, the poor brother cannot have so good a seat as the rich.”<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, it was important to Mueller that givers be motivated out of cheerful freewill, citing that “God loveth a cheerful giver.”<sup>52</sup>

In 1832, Mueller moved to Bethesda chapel in Bristol. It was in Bristol that Mueller’s vision for ministry fully blossomed. He began by adding work with orphans and teaching Sunday School to his pastoral duties. By 1834–1835, Mueller had founded his two major endeavours: the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, a mix between a Bible school and a mission society, and The Bristol Orphanage

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<sup>49</sup> George Mueller, *The Autobiography of George Mueller* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1984), 10.

<sup>50</sup> George Mueller, *The Autobiography of George Mueller: The Life of Trust*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 81.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

Mission Work. The orphanage began small, but it eventually housed over 2,000 children at a time.

The story of Mueller's life captured the imagination of the young Dwight Moody. Throughout his autobiography, Mueller stated that he and his wife never regretted the decision to trust God completely for their financial resources.<sup>53</sup> He further claimed, "All our needs had been met more abundantly than if I had received a regular salary."<sup>54</sup> His reminder that the Lord would provide for them "*by the day* [...]" and almost "*by the hour*"<sup>55</sup> served as a moving illustration of God's ability to provide for those who trust him.

Moody applied a version of Mueller's approach to his own life. S. A. Kean, the treasurer for the YMCA from the beginning of Moody's work there, recalled, "Mr. Moody was fertile in schemes and expedients for raising money for the Lord's work; but of the many tens of thousands of dollars which he secured for the Association, he received nothing whatever for himself."<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, he explained that Moody refused a salary because "it would embarrass him, and limit his freedom to go at a moment's notice wherever the Lord might call him."<sup>57</sup> This appeal to go without a salary in order to maintain freedom to follow the leading of God sounds similar to Mueller's concern that man's money would lead to man's control. Mueller wrote, "If money was paid, [the patron] is a member and has a right to vote."<sup>58</sup> Kean expressed the depth of Moody's commitment to refusing a salary for his work in that he did not "remember to have paid him a dollar either for his services or the expenses incidental to his work. Neither [did he] remember any appropriation being made for his assistance,

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>56</sup> Daniels, *D.L. Moody*, 87.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>58</sup> Mueller, *Life of Trust*, 57.



though he often needed and always deserved it.”<sup>59</sup> Like Mueller, who affirmed repeatedly that the Lord was able to “richly supply all [his] temporal needs,”<sup>60</sup> Moody proclaimed to his friends, “God is rich, and I am working for him.”<sup>61</sup>

It was not only the unique nature of George Mueller’s life that inspired Moody; it was also the common passion that they shared for poor children. In essence, Mueller served to shape Moody because Mueller was an embodiment of the passions that Moody was already pursuing. Mueller’s passion for caring for orphans is evident throughout his writing. On one occasion, Mueller recounted being moved by “a poor little orphan boy” who attended one of his schools, but had recently been taken to the poorhouse. Almost despondent, Mueller wrote, “May this lead me to do something to supply the temporal needs of poor children!”<sup>62</sup> As his vision to begin an orphan house moved closer towards reality, Mueller’s journals displayed the same passion. He wrote of desiring “to be used by God to help the poor children and train them in the ways of God.”<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the very fact that Mueller’s two major endeavours—the Scripture Knowledge Institute and the orphanage—were both established to meet the needs of children would have demonstrated to Moody the focus of Mueller’s heart.

Mueller’s example undoubtedly provided hope and vision for the young and impressionable Moody. After seeing the school in Bristol, Moody wrote to his mother,

The great orphan schools of George Mueller are at Bristol. He  
has 1,150 children in his house, but never asks a man for a cent to

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<sup>59</sup> Daniels, *D.L. Moody*, 87.

<sup>60</sup> Mueller, *Life of Trust*, 39.

<sup>61</sup> Daniels, *D.L. Moody*, 88.

<sup>62</sup> Mueller, *Life of Trust*, 63.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

support them. He calls on God, and God sends money to him. It

is wonderful to see what God can do with a man of prayer.<sup>64</sup>

Mueller also revolutionized Moody's approach to Bible study. As we shall see, Moody had a fierce devotion to the Bible that characterized and shaped his entire ministry. Prior to meeting Mueller, Moody's Bible study, while extremely fervent, lacked structure and direction. Moody apparently flipped open his Bible and studied at random. While Daniels and Dorsett attribute the development of D. L. Moody's Bible study formation to Stillson, Moody himself made a different claim. In his book *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study*,<sup>65</sup> Moody directly attributes the drastic change in his own personal study to Mueller. Moody wrote, "I received from George Mueller the idea of taking one book of the Bible at a time. I found that plan was very helpful to me. If I hadn't much time, I would take a short epistle or one of the Minor Prophets, and read it at one sitting."<sup>66</sup> In a sermon, Moody explained the value of this method by paralleling the scriptures to a letter from his wife. In his comparison, Moody noted that if he only read one page a day, he would "forget what was on the first page before [he] got to the eighth."<sup>67</sup> While Moody eventually moved beyond Mueller's technique, Mueller's method remained foundational.<sup>68</sup>

Mueller also influenced Moody indirectly through the life of one of his converts, Henry Moorhouse.<sup>69</sup> Moorhouse was a profligate—a wild drinker and gambler who was converted through the ministry of Mueller in Manchester in 1861.

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<sup>64</sup> D.L. Moody, letter to mother, London, England, March 19, 1867, Biographical Files, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>65</sup> D. L. Moody, *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1895), 79.

<sup>66</sup> Goss, 510.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 510.

<sup>68</sup> The next chapter will include a section on Moody's approach to Bible study. Moody's continued admiration and appreciation for Mueller's life and teaching was further evidenced in that Moody brought Mueller to America in 1877 and continued to follow his example.

<sup>69</sup> Some American scholars use an alternative spelling of Henry's name: "Morehouse" or "Moorehouse." I will use "Moorhouse," the spelling employed by British scholars.

Shortly after his conversion, Moorhouse embarked on his own career as an evangelist and by 1867 was a leading revivalist in the British Isles. Moorhouse became interested in Moody and travelled to Dublin to hear Moody preach. Apparently, Moody did not make much of an impression on Moorhouse, whose analysis of Moody's preaching was blunt. Moorhouse remarked to Moody afterward that he did not use the Bible enough.<sup>70</sup> Further, Moorhouse informed Moody that he was coming to America to preach with him.

Shortly after arriving back in Chicago, Moody received a note indicating Moorhouse had just arrived in New York and was coming out west to preach. Though miffed, Moody arranged for Moorhouse to speak in Chicago for several days while he was gone. Moorhouse arrived at the prearranged time and Moody left to attend to business. Upon returning, Moody ventured out to hear Moorhouse, who was preaching a seven-part series on John 3:16. In closing up that seventh sermon, Moorhouse said, "For seven nights I have been trying to tell you how much God loves you, but this poor stammering tongue of mine will not let me."<sup>71</sup> After the sermon, Moody confided to a friend,

I never knew up to that time that God loved us so much. This heart of mine began to thaw out; I could not keep back the tears. I just drank it in. So did the crowded congregation. I tell you there is one thing that draws above everything else in the world and that is love.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> According to A. P. Fitt, Moorhouse met Moody "in a little meeting hall on a summers' night and DLM preached. Moorhouse saw he was talking outside the Bible. After service he said, Mr. Moody you are deficient in the Word of God. If you'll preach God's word instead of your own He'll make a great power of you." A.P. Fitt, transcribed comment, n.d., Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>71</sup> Steer, *Delighted*, 260-61. A similar account is found in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 138-40.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Day, 145

Moody repeatedly told the story of Moorhouse preaching and noted the dramatic impact it had on him. It is possible Moody exaggerated the influence of this event; however, Dorsett goes so far as to claim that it utterly transformed Moody and that only his conversion had a similarly dramatic effect.<sup>73</sup> What is clear that is that Moorhouse's teaching reinforced what Moody had learned as a child from Oliver Everett, seen as the driving force in General O. O. Howard's life and observed in the ministry of George Mueller. From this point on, the love of God would be the central theme of his ministries<sup>74</sup> and the Bible would be the centrepiece of his preaching.<sup>75</sup> As William put it in his biography of his father, "Mr. Moorhouse taught Moody to draw his sword full length, to fling the scabbard away, and enter the battle with the naked blade."<sup>76</sup>

## 2. The Plymouth Brethren and John Darby

George Mueller and Henry Moorhouse were both Plymouth Brethren. Probably through his admiration for Mueller, Moody was drawn deeply into the Brethren fellowship while visiting the United Kingdom. He spent significant time with one of the original Plymouth Brethren, John Darby, even inviting him to come to America to preach at Moody's Illinois Street Church.<sup>77</sup> Moody met other Plymouth Brethren notables, including F. C. Bland and Henry Varley, and was also introduced to the writings of C. H. Mackintosh.

The Plymouth Brethren emerged out of Anglicanism in the 1820s, taking a primitivist approach to Christianity. The movement grew out of the concerns of four men—John Nelson Darby, Edward Cronin, John Bellett and Francis Hutchinson.

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<sup>73</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 139.

<sup>74</sup> The following works show Moorhouse's influence on DLM: Pollock, *Moody*, 68f; William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 137f; J. MacPherson, *Henry Moorhouse: The English Evangelist* (Glasgow, Scotland: John Ritchie, n. d.); and Findlay, *Moody*, 126. The next chapter includes a section on Moody's doctrine of the love of God.

<sup>75</sup> The role of the Bible in Moody's life and ministry will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>76</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 140.

<sup>77</sup> Findlay, *Moody*, 251. Moody did not meet Darby during his visit to Britain in 1867; Darby was in the United States at the time. The two would meet when Moody returned to the States in the late 1860s and later again in England.

During the winter of 1827–28, they began meeting in Francis Hutchinson's home in Dublin, Ireland, to practise their new convictions, coming together on the Lord's Day and remembering the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread. This simple service, patterned after the New Testament church, was the product of several years of study in which the four men compared what they found in the Bible with what they saw in the Church of England. They concluded there was no biblical justification for a national church or even for various dissenting bodies. They rejected some Anglican practices, including a distinct clergy and its accompanying ecclesiastical structure, as well as elements of the liturgy. This led them to withdraw from the Church of England in order to practise their simple form of faith. The movement spread in Dublin, and eventually spread to England. The group began to flourish in Plymouth, England, in the early 1830s and people in the area began to call them "brethren from Plymouth." Eventually they became known simply as the "Plymouth Brethren."<sup>78</sup> When the Brethren split in the 1840s, Darby emerged as the leader of the Exclusive Brethren.<sup>79</sup>

John Nelson Darby was born to a wealthy Anglo-Irish family on November 18, 1800.<sup>80</sup> Despite his father's objections, Darby pursued a career in the Anglican Church, was ordained as a deacon in 1825 and became a priest in 1826. Darby was installed as

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<sup>78</sup> This sketch is drawn from Findlay, *Moody*, 125; John Cannon, "Plymouth Brethren," *The Oxford Companion to British History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), "Encyclopedia.com," <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O110-Plymouthbrethren.html> (accessed July 13, 2009); "Plymouth Brethrenism," *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), "Encyclopedia.com," <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O245-PlymouthBrethrenism.html> (accessed July 14, 2009); and Bellet, John Gifford, et al., *Interesting Reminiscences of the Early History of "Brethren" in and around 1827*, "Bruederbewegung.de", <http://www.bruederbewegung.de/pdf/reminiscences.pdf> (accessed July 14, 2009).

<sup>79</sup> Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1992), 87. The centrality of Darby's role in the emergence of the Plymouth Brethren is demonstrated by the fact they were sometimes referred to as "Darbyites." Darby would describe the impetus for the "Plymouth Brethren" in the following manner: "What gave rise to the existence of so-called Plymouth Brethren is the grand truth, the great fact, of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, to form the body of Christ into one; then the coming of the Saviour as the continual expectation of the Christian." John Nelson Darby, "What is the Unity of the Church?" *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* (London: Morrish, n.d.), 20: 305, quoted in "Plymouthbrethren.com," <http://www.plymouthbrethren.com> (accessed July 14, 2009).

<sup>80</sup> This sketch is drawn from "The Papers of John Nelson Darby," The John Rylands University Library Archives, Manchester, England, <http://archives.li.man.ac.uk/ead/search?operation=full&recid=gb133jnd> (accessed July 26, 2009).

curate in Calary, near Enniskerry, County Wicklow, and reportedly distinguished himself for his successful ministry among the Roman Catholic peasants of his parish. Throughout these years, Darby remained spiritually restless, at one point flirting with Roman Catholicism. Later he described himself as looking “for the Church... I too, governed by a morbid imagination, thought much of Rome, and its professed sanctity, and catholicity, and antiquity. I held apostolic succession fully, and the channels of grace to be there only.”<sup>81</sup> Shortly after his brief consideration of Catholicism, Darby left the Anglican Church and eventually joined the newly formed Brethren movement.

Under Darby’s tutelage, the Plymouth Brethren became known for their unique practices and doctrinal emphases. They emphasized the authority of the Bible, an instantaneous conversion experience and premillennialism. Darby and the Brethren have been described as preaching the “absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures.”<sup>82</sup> For example, in his synopsis of II Timothy, Darby wrote, “The scriptures are the permanent expression of the mind and will of God furnished as such with His authority... but this is not all—they are inspired. It is not only that the truth is given in them by inspiration. It is not this which is here stated. They are inspired.”<sup>83</sup>

This belief concerning the inspiration and reliability of the text was coupled with a strong conception of perspicuity and a literal hermeneutic. Darby had begun studying the Bible independently about 1820. This independent study became a critical component in his religious life. Darby’s religious conversion stemmed directly from reading the Holy Scriptures alone or, as he put it, “independent of any assistance from

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<sup>81</sup> William Blair Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), 13. Interestingly, Francis Newman, the brother of famous Roman convert John Henry Newman, spent much time with Darby. Darby would eventually bring Francis Newman into the Brethren movement.

<sup>82</sup> Findlay, *Moody*, 125-26. Findlay cites Henry A. Ironside, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1942).

<sup>83</sup> John Nelson Darby, “Synopsis of the Books of the Bible: 2 Timothy,” “The Christian Classics Ethereal Library,” <http://www.ccel.org/d/darby/synopsis/2Timothy.html> (accessed September 5, 2009). Darby’s fully developed position can be found in John Nelson Darby, “The Inspiration of the Scriptures,” *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* (London: Morrish, n.d.), 6:350-65. The next chapter will detail Moody’s view of the Bible.

man.”<sup>84</sup> He therefore insisted, “...that individual Christians, not intermediaries, such as churches, priests, or pastors were qualified to act as the final arbiters regarding interpretation and appropriation of the Bible.”<sup>85</sup> Individuals could derive the meaning of the text using a literal hermeneutic.<sup>86</sup>

Moody’s relationship with John Darby was difficult. Commenting on Moody’s work in Edinburgh in 1873, Darby wrote, “As to the work at Edinburgh, I dare say there may have been conversions, and one must bless God for that. But Moody before he came to England denied openly all work of grace in conversion, and denounced it as diabolical in his own pulpit.”<sup>87</sup> Dorsett wrote of Darby, “One day while doing a Bible reading time at Farwell Hall in Chicago he and Moody had a verbal exchange on freewill. The session ended when Darby, in disgust with Moody’s emphasis on ‘whosoever will may come,’ closed his Bible and walked out; and he never returned.”<sup>88</sup> Earlier, Robert T. Grant, a Brethren evangelist, had been sent to Chicago to proselytize for the Brethren. His report to Darby stated, “Moody is quite in a pet about so many of them leaving him who were his best workers.”<sup>89</sup>

Despite Moody’s conflict with Darby, the Brethren remained a force in Moody’s life, shaping not only his hermeneutic and personal Bible study, but also his understanding of inspiration. However, Darby was not the only Brethren leader to

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Winston Terrance Sutherland, “John Nelson Darby: His Contributions to Contemporary Theological Higher Education” (Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State, 2007), 8. Darby also saw his conversion as being “brought by grace to feel he could entirely trust the word of God alone.” This stands in sharp contrast to the alternative of trusting established religion as reified in the Anglican Church with its formal system connected to the state of England. Quoted in Sutherland, 10.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>86</sup> For a detailed study on Darby’s hermeneutical methodology, see F. S. Elmore, “A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of the Two Peoples of God in John Nelson Darby” (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990), 124-200.

<sup>87</sup> John Nelson Darby, *Letters of J. N. Darby*, reprint ed. (Sunbury, Penn.: Believers Bookshelf, 1971), 2:259.

<sup>88</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 137.

<sup>89</sup> Robert T. Grant, report to J. N. Darby, August 9, 1868, Sibthorpe Manuscripts, The John Rylands University Library, Manchester University, Manchester, England.

influence Moody's understanding of the Bible. Concerning C. H. Mackintosh, Moody wrote,

I had my attention called to C. H. M.'s notes, and was so much pleased and at the same time profited by the way they opened up Scripture truth, that I secured at once all the writings of the same author, and if they could not be replaced, would rather part with my entire library, excepting my Bible, than with these writings. They have been to me a very key to the Scriptures.<sup>90</sup>

The Brethren also introduced Moody to a doctrine that would distinguish him from earlier American revivalists, premillennialism, or the doctrine of the "imminent return of Christ."<sup>91</sup> While we do not know exactly when Moody was first exposed to premillennialism, it is apparent that by the end of 1867, Moody had embraced premillennialism and the doctrine became standard fare in his preaching.<sup>92</sup>

Dwight Moody was born about the time premillennialism began to emerge in the British Isles and the United States, and he would play a critical role in its ascendance.<sup>93</sup> After Moody, virtually every major evangelist in the United States would espouse

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<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Ernest Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1978), 166. "C. H. Mackintosh was born in October 1820, at Glenmalure Barricks, County Wicklow, Ireland, the son of the captain of a Highland regiment. Mackintosh was converted at the age of eighteen through the letters of a devout sister, and the reading of J. N. Darby's *Operations of the Spirit*." At twenty-four, he briefly opened a private school at Westport. However, shortly thereafter he felt compelled to enter the ministry and spent the rest of his life writing on or lecturing from the Bible. This brief biographic sketch was derived from Stem Publishing, "Charles Henry Mackintosh," Stem Publishing <http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/Biographies/chmackintosh.html> (accessed September 5, 2009).

<sup>91</sup> Given the importance of premillennialism to the Plymouth Brethren, it is inconceivable that the subject would not have come up in Moody's interaction with them. As an indication of Moody's respect for their teaching on the subject, he would later recruit George Mueller to write a volume for a series on premillennialism. The series, entitled *Premillennial Works*, was published by Fleming Revell in the 1880s.

<sup>92</sup> In fact, Moody's emphasis on premillennialism was a distinctive of his relative to earlier revivalists like Finney. Gundry claims Moody was "the first noteworthy premillennial preacher of revival and evangelicalism in America." Gundry, *Love them In*, 178. This will be further developed in the next chapter.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Kieran Whalen, "Millenarianism and Millennialism in America: 1790-1880" (PhD diss., State U of New York at Stony Brook, 1971), 27-101. Whalen argues convincingly that premillennialism was picking up in potency before the Civil War. Moody would be one of the key figures in bringing it to a prominent position among evangelicals.



premillennial theology, including George Needham, W. J. Erdmann, Major D. W. Whittle, J. Wilbur Chapman, Leander Munhall, Reuben A. Torrey and Billy Sunday. A similar pattern emerged among prominent pastors and leaders of the evangelical world missions movement, such as James H. Brookes, Robert Speer, A. T. Pierson, A. B. Simpson, A. J. Gordon, Charles Blanchard and C. I. Scofield.<sup>94</sup>

At least four factors predisposed Moody to the premillennial position. First, given the difficulty of his boyhood, it is not surprising he would be drawn to a position that emphasized otherworldly hope. While he and his family emerged from the loss of his father, he had no illusions about other families who did not recover. Second, Moody knew the harshness of life most urban dwellers faced—the enormous problems in the cities and the seemingly overwhelming nature of them. Third, he saw the catastrophic effects of the Civil War. He tended to the dead and wounded, saw the devastation and the lingering bitterness. Based on these experiences, it is understandable Moody would be drawn to premillennialism's pessimism concerning the trajectory of society. Fourth, men whom he deeply admired like Mueller and Spurgeon<sup>95</sup> were committed to premillennialism. It is hardly surprising he became an enthusiastic proponent of the doctrine.

Premillennialism emerged in opposition to postmillennialism.<sup>96</sup>

Postmillennialism was the dominant view in America from the time of the Puritans to early in the twentieth century, and was well established in England. According to Bebbington, in England “the postmillennial theory was evidently widespread.”<sup>97</sup> Men like William Carey, Thomas Chalmers and others spread the view. A crucial work

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<sup>94</sup> Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875 – 1982* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1983), 32-3.

<sup>95</sup> For the case for Spurgeon's premillennialism, see Dennis M. Swanson, “Charles H. Spurgeon and Eschatology: Did He have a Discernible Millennial Position?” (M. Div. Thesis, Masters Seminary, Sun Valley, CA., n.d.), <http://www.narnia3.com/articles/spurgeonmil.pdf> (accessed September 5, 2009).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. I am dependent on Swanson's work throughout this section.

<sup>97</sup> Bebbington, *Britain: A History*, 62. Amillennialism was held by a number of important theologians on both sides of the Atlantic as well.

delineating the postmillennial view was David Brown's *Christ's Second Coming: Will it be Premillennial?* (1846). In this work, Brown, who became the Principal of the Aberdeen Free Church College, presented what became the classic presentation of postmillennial eschatology in England.<sup>98</sup>

Postmillennialism emphasizes the present aspects of God's kingdom that will reach fruition in the future. It asserts that the millennium will be ushered in through Christian preaching and teaching that will result in a more godly, peaceful and prosperous world where many economic, social and educational problems will be solved. The new age will come about as more people are converted to Christ.<sup>99</sup>

By comparison, premillennialism asserts that the kingdom of Christ will be inaugurated in a cataclysmic and supernatural manner. The premillennialist believes the return of Christ will be preceded by declension, including wars, famines and earthquakes. The Antichrist will appear, and there will be a great tribulation. These events will climax in the Second Coming, followed by a thousand-year reign by Christ and his saints that will be established suddenly and supernaturally rather than gradually through the conversion of individuals. The curse will be removed from nature, and even the desert will produce abundant crops. Jewish people will be converted in large numbers and will again have a prominent place in God's work. Christ will restrain evil during this millennial rule. Despite the idyllic conditions of the golden age, there will be

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<sup>98</sup> This work has been reprinted several times, most recently by the Theonomist Dominion Press, and is looked to as foundational work by theonomist authors. Kenneth A. Kantzer, "Our Future Hope: Eschatology and the Role of the Church," *Christianity Today*, 31:2 (February 1987), 5. An interview article with Gleason Archer, Jack Davis, Anthony Hoekema, Alan Johnson, and John Walvoord. Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971). In this book, Murray presents an excellent historical theology of postmillennialism, centring on the Puritans, particularly the English Puritans.

<sup>99</sup> Robert G. Clouse, "Views of the Millennium," *Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 2:715.

a final rebellion of wicked people, followed by a final judgment, when humans will be consigned to heaven or hell.<sup>100</sup>

At first blush, it might appear logical for premillennialists to shy away from social agendas. They could perhaps be uncaring or even fatalistic about the affairs of this world, because of their belief that real improvement can only take place after the Second Coming. In fact, premillennialists maintain that things must get worse before they get better—that the Second Coming must be preceded by wars, pestilence and chaos. By contrast, postmillennialists could logically become paternalists or activists in world affairs because of the crucial role of human involvement in the building of the New Jerusalem. In practice, though, premillennialists have responded to social needs in a variety of ways. One notable variance appeared between the premillennial approach to social issues in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Boyd Hilton in *Age of the Atonement*, pointed out an apparent role reversal between premillennialists and postmillennialists in the nineteenth century. He noted that some premillennialists, like Shaftesbury, were the ones to lead the call for social intervention in the United Kingdom.<sup>101</sup> Ralph Brown best explained this interventionist premillennialism in the United Kingdom. He pointed out that premillennialists in the United Kingdom were hardly monolithic on the question of social intervention as a result of the varied theological frameworks from which they approached the issue. These frameworks provided alternative ways of viewing the world, society and the role and responsibility of individuals and the church. Thus, Brown concluded that premillennialism was less determinative than other theological convictions in explaining the behaviour of Shaftesbury and similar premillennialists.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 716.

<sup>101</sup> Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1795 – 1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 17.

<sup>102</sup> Ralph Brown, "Evangelical Social Thought," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 6, no. 1 (January 2009), 126-27.

In the United States, however, premillennialists took a more hands-off approach to social issues. Timothy Weber concluded that premillennialism often shied away from social concerns because of its “hopeless view of the present order...”<sup>103</sup> In a similar vein, Martin Marty maintained, “Premillennialists often give up on the world before God does.” Marty also wrote, “As a result, the social conscience of an important part of American evangelicalism has atrophied and died.”<sup>104</sup>

However, three caveats are in order in relation to Moody’s premillennialism. First, as we have seen, Moody’s initial exposure to the doctrine was to the British variety. This may help to explain why some of his British colleagues were more activist than Moody.<sup>105</sup> Second, both Weber and Marty’s comments are specific to a mature form of premillennialism.<sup>106</sup> In the early twentieth century, premillennialism in America became entangled in the modernist/fundamentalist debates and came to reflect the militant separatism of the fundamentalist movement in its maturity.<sup>107</sup> Moody, on the other hand, interacted with American premillennialism in its infancy, when it was less inclined toward militancy. Third, though American premillennialists tended to avoid engaging with social ills, they were hardly uniform in this stance. Weber identified three different responses within American premillennialism. Citing Jonathan Butler’s study of the Adventist movement, Weber argued that the categories Butler used for Adventists were applicable to premillennialists as well.<sup>108</sup>

Butler defined the first category, *apolitical apocalyptic*, as those who withdraw from political issues and involvements. Weber cited James Brookes as an example of

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<sup>103</sup> Weber, *Shadow of the Second Coming*, 234.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>105</sup> The difference between British and American premillennialists is intriguing. It goes well beyond the scope of this paper to try to explain the differences. However, it appears to be a worthy topic for additional research.

<sup>106</sup> Both their comments are evaluations of the overall effect of American premillennialism through the 1980s.

<sup>107</sup> See Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 43-71.

<sup>108</sup> Jonathan M. Butler, “Adventism and the American Experience,” *The Rise of Adventism*, ed. Edwin Gaustad (New York: Harper, 1974), 174-206, cited in Weber, 235. The following paragraphs are drawn largely from Weber, 235-37.

this position. Brookes was a pastor in St. Louis who became a close friend of Moody. Moody would later recruit Brookes to write a title for a series on premillennialism.<sup>109</sup> Brookes would also mentor C. I. Scofield for several years after Scofield's conversion.<sup>110</sup> Brookes made his position clear in an address to other premillennialists in 1880, "Well would it be if the children of God were to keep aloof from the whole defiling." He added that, since believers were "dead to the world," they should stay out of all political involvement, even voting, since "dead men don't vote."<sup>111</sup> However, Brookes' position was the minority position among American premillennialists.<sup>112</sup>

Butler called the second position *political apocalyptic*. Butler populated this category with those who are politically engaged, but purely for the purpose of verifying their position. These premillennialists engage in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. They are observers, rather than regular participants. Their interaction is limited by their firm belief that the current age is in inevitable decline.<sup>113</sup>

Butler's final group, called the *political prophetic*, assumed social and political responsibility. However, their involvement in these realms is highly selective and emphasizes individualistic and moralistic short-term goals. In other words, those who fit into the *political prophetic* category tend to eschew long-term programmes that are attempting social transformation. They do believe they can effect some basic change, but they also believe that any long-term attempt at transformation will prove to be doomed until the return of Jesus.<sup>114</sup>

One thing is clear: the premillennialism with which Moody interacted was not monolithic, and there were a variety of approaches to social ills among its followers.

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<sup>109</sup> The series, noted earlier, was entitled "Premillennial Works" and was published in the 1880's by Fleming Revell.

<sup>110</sup> Weber, 235.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Weber, 235.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>113</sup> Weber, 235-36.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 236.

Moody closely interacted with proponents of the different approaches and, as we shall see in the next section, Moody's premillennialism was not thoroughly developed. Nonetheless, while Moody did not articulate a nuanced premillennialism, he was a man of action and as we shall see in Chapter V, his behaviour fits best with the *political prophetic* category. Therefore, while it is evident that premillennialism shaped Moody; it was just one among a host of theological influences. Consequently, premillennialism must be seen as one of a number of doctrines that shaped his approach to social ills.

### 3. Charles Spurgeon

Another premillennialist to whom Moody had a particular attraction was Charles Spurgeon. In fact, Dorsett went so far as to describe Spurgeon as Moody's "hero," while David Bebbington called Moody, "One of Spurgeon's most ardent admirers in the United States."<sup>115</sup> This assessment was reinforced in an 1881 letter from Moody to Spurgeon. He wrote, "...I have for years thought more of you than any other man preaching on this earth."<sup>116</sup> From the time of his conversion, Moody claimed to have heard of Spurgeon. He also claimed that, "everything I could get hold of in print that he ever said, I read."<sup>117</sup> This is particularly telling given Moody's general lack of reading.<sup>118</sup> When Moody arrived in England in 1867, Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle was one of the first places he went. Finding he could not get in without a ticket, Moody determined to find a way in and ended up in the gallery, soaking in Spurgeon's every word. As Moody described it, when Spurgeon "walked down to the

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<sup>115</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 132; Bebbington, *Dominance*, 45.

<sup>116</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to Spurgeon, October 11, 1881, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Dorsett, *Passion*, 132. The quote is from an address Moody delivered at Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1884.

<sup>118</sup> Findlay described the relationship between Moody and Spurgeon as "a bit strained" and claimed the "ties between the two men were never strong." Given the quote above and the next several pages in the chapter, it is clear Findlay was wrong. Findlay, 145.

platform, my eyes feasted upon him, and my heart's desire for years was at last accomplished."<sup>119</sup>

Moody followed Spurgeon for several more days, listening to Spurgeon speak during a series of special meetings at the Agricultural Hall.<sup>120</sup> Moody endeared himself to Spurgeon and the two ended up spending four days together, a remarkable amount of time given Spurgeon's schedule. At the end of the trip, Moody is purported to have said, "...he sent me back to America a better man."<sup>121</sup>

The 1867 trip to Spurgeon's church would be the first of many such visits by Moody. Each time, Moody demonstrated his high regard for Spurgeon. Moody went to the Tabernacle again in 1872, remarking, "I thought I would come back over again to learn a little more."<sup>122</sup> In 1874 and 1875, Spurgeon wrote to Moody inviting him to speak at the Tabernacle. In response to Spurgeon's 1874 request, Moody's replied, "In regards to coming to your Tabernacle, I consider it a great honor to be invited; and in fact I should consider it an honor to black your boots..."<sup>123</sup> Spurgeon spoke at Moody's campaign in 1875.<sup>124</sup> Moody agreed to speak again at the Tabernacle in 1881, and remarked, "I do not know of a church in all the land that I shrink from as I do from yours; not but what your people are in sympathy with the gospel I preach, but you can do it so much better than I can."<sup>125</sup> Speaking at the Tabernacle in 1884, Moody noted, "I have been here a great many times since (1867), and I never come into the building

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<sup>119</sup> Pollock, *Moody*, 66.

<sup>120</sup> Moody gives an extended account of this event and speaks of Spurgeon's influence on him.

<sup>121</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, Susannah Spurgeon, W. J. Harrauld, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, (Chicago: Curts & Jennings, 1900) 4:247.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), 157.

<sup>124</sup> Spurgeon, Spurgeon, & Harrauld, 169-70.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

without getting a blessing to my soul.”<sup>126</sup> Dorsett concluded that Moody “studied at Spurgeon’s feet whenever he visited Britain.”<sup>127</sup>

The feeling of admiration Moody held for Spurgeon was mutual. Spurgeon defended Moody’s work.<sup>128</sup> Speaking publicly about Moody, Spurgeon said,

I want you now to hear me a moment while I say the brother who is about to speak, Mr. Moody, is one whom we all love. He is one whom we not only all love, but he is evidently one whom God loves. We feel devotedly grateful to Almighty God for raising him up and for sending him to England to preach the gospel to such great numbers with plainness and power. We shall continue to pray for him when he has gone home. Among the things we shall pray for will be that he may come back again. I might quote the language of an old Scotch song with regard to Prince Charlie – “Bonnie Moody’s gaun away, Will ye no come back again? Better loved ye canna be, Will ye no come back again?”<sup>129</sup>

Moody was even a guest in Spurgeon’s home. In fact, Spurgeon rearranged his schedule in order to accommodate Moody’s schedule.<sup>130</sup> When Spurgeon died in the early 1890s, his widow sent Moody a duplicate of his pulpit Bible with the following inscription.

Mr. D. L. Moody from Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon,

In tender memory of the beloved one gone home to God. This

Bible has been used by my precious husband and is now given

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>127</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 396.

<sup>128</sup> In the “NOTES” section of *The Sword and Trowel* from 1875, Spurgeon defends Moody’s work in every month from March until July. He repeated his defence of Moody in the *Sword and Trowel* in 1882.

<sup>129</sup> Robert Shindler, *The Life and Legacy of Charles Haddon Spurgeon: From the Usher’s Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit* (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1892), 207. No date is given for the year of the quote

<sup>130</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 396. Dorsett notes a series of seven letters from Spurgeon to Moody written in 1884 in an attempt to arrange a dinner at his home.



with unfeigned pleasure to one in whose hands its blessed service  
will be continued and extended.

S. Spurgeon, Westwood,

November 20, 1892.<sup>131</sup>

In fact, Mrs. Spurgeon sent Moody two Bibles. In addition to his pulpit Bible, she sent him a copy of Spurgeon's study Bible. In this Bible, Spurgeon had marked in red passages that he had preached. In William Moody's biography of his father, he notes that after Moody received it, as he prepared a sermon he always checked that Bible first to see if Spurgeon had preached the text. If he had, Moody would immediately look it up in the collection of Spurgeon's sermons.<sup>132</sup>

Moody clearly looked to Spurgeon as a model for ministry and as a theological sounding board. He read Spurgeon, carefully observed Spurgeon and checked his sermons against Spurgeon. No other single figure functioned this way for Moody. That is not to say Moody had blind allegiance to Spurgeon. Moody would never adopt Calvinism like Spurgeon, and he was not above criticizing elements of Spurgeon's ministry.<sup>133</sup> However, Moody made it a point to see Spurgeon whenever he was in the United Kingdom. Further, by Moody's own testimony, he began reading Spurgeon shortly after arriving in Chicago and continued reading him throughout his life. Spurgeon is probably the only person he consistently read; therefore, it is reasonable to assume Spurgeon played a significant role in Moody's thinking. Consequently,

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<sup>131</sup> A similar account appears in August 1929 in *The Record of Christian Work*, which notes the following: "After the death of the great London preacher Charles H. Spurgeon Mrs. Spurgeon made a duplicate of the study Bible in which he noted in the margins the texts on which he had preached, and gave this to D. L. Moody."

<sup>132</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 447.

<sup>133</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 133. In the next chapter, I will discuss Moody's relationship to Calvinism. In terms of Moody's willingness to criticize Spurgeon, here Dorsett points out Moody was critical of Spurgeon's Sunday School and his ministry with children generally.

Spurgeon's social vision, as well as his understanding of conversion, premillennialism, pneumatology and the Bible, warrants a somewhat more extended examination.

Given the shape of their early lives, a friendship between Moody and Spurgeon seemed quite unlikely. Born in 1834, Spurgeon, unlike Moody, was reared in the evangelical Protestant faith.<sup>134</sup> As a boy, he lived with his paternal grandparents, and his grandfather was a minister. Also unlike Moody, Spurgeon began reading at an early age. Patricia Kruppa wrote that "his first playthings were books, and even before he could read he was put in a chair, given a copy of *The Evangelical Magazine* to examine, and admonished to remain quiet and not to disturb his grandfather."<sup>135</sup> While Spurgeon's youth was inundated with works such as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* and *Pilgrim's Progress*, his conversion occurred later as the result of a lay minister's sermon at a Primitive Methodist Church in 1850.<sup>136</sup> Though Spurgeon's doctrinal position for the majority of his ministry was Baptist with a Puritan heritage, Spurgeon would allude frequently to that snowy morning that he spent in the Methodist church.<sup>137</sup> In many ways, Spurgeon's ascent to the pulpit seemed the logical ending given his rearing.

As a minister, Spurgeon espoused premillennialism and Calvinism; he also preached extensively on the Holy Spirit. In sermons from 1859, Spurgeon asserted that the Spirit's work in the believer does not come to an end at conversion. As he put it, "the acceptable acts of the Christian's life, cannot be performed without the Spirit."<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> I am indebted to Thomas Breimaier's unpublished paper, "Moody, Spurgeon, and the Historical Unity of evangelicalism," May 2007, for the content of this brief biographical section.

<sup>135</sup> Patricia Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher's Progress* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), 19-20.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>137</sup> Many contemporary figures who espouse Puritan theology in fact see Spurgeon as a Victorian Puritan. See, for instance, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 258. He writes that Spurgeon's thought is "a perfect example of Puritan thinking."

<sup>138</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, "The Necessity of the Spirit's Work," *The New Park Street Pulpit* (May 8, 1859), 5: 251, "The Spurgeon Archive," <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0251.htm> (accessed September 10, 2009).

In the 1864 sermon, "The Superlative Excellence of the Holy Spirit," Spurgeon challenged his hearers: "Do not say that we want money; we shall have it soon enough when the Spirit touches men's hearts. Do not say that we want buildings, churches, edifices; all these may be very well in subservience, but the main want of the Church is the Spirit, and men into whom the Spirit may be poured."<sup>139</sup> This absolute need for the Spirit by the church and by the individual believer was a constant refrain in Spurgeon's sermons and writings until his death in 1892.<sup>140</sup>

Spurgeon was particularly concerned about the role of the Holy Spirit in ministry. He was adamant about this when speaking to his charges at his Pastor's College, an institution he founded in 1857. In 1877, as part of his Friday afternoon lectures, he noted, "[T]he Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. Without Him, our office is a mere name... We ought to be driven forth with abhorrence from the society of honest men for daring to speak in the name of the Lord if the Spirit of God rests not upon us." He concluded, "Little wonder that the root cause of many useless ministries lies in the lack of distinctly recognizing the power of the Holy Ghost."<sup>141</sup>

Spurgeon was not just a preacher; he was active in his community. Spurgeon's approach to social activity was unique. Generally, social concern was displayed in three distinct ways in Victorian Britain: individual charity, reform and calls for restructuring society.<sup>142</sup> Of these three options, Spurgeon falls into the first. Yet he and the Metropolitan Tabernacle maintained a remarkable record of community involvement. Specifically, they provided training for poor ministers, an orphanage, a book

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<sup>139</sup> *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 10: 337.

<sup>140</sup> Michael Haykin, "'Where the Spirit of God is, there is Power': An Introduction to Spurgeon's Teaching on the Holy Spirit" *Churchman* 106, no.3 (1992), "Churchsociety.org," [http://www.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman\\_106\\_3\\_Haykin.pdf](http://www.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman_106_3_Haykin.pdf) (accessed September 5, 2009).

<sup>141</sup> Charles Spurgeon, "The Holy Spirit in Connection with our Ministry," *Lectures to My Students* (London/Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954), 186-87.

<sup>142</sup> David Nelson Duke, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Social Concern Exceeding an Individualist, Self-Help Ideology," *Baptist History and Heritage*, 22, no. 4 (1987), 7-56. I am indebted to this source for much of the structure and content of this section.

distribution society, an almshouse and numerous societies and missions. Spurgeon supported public education, Shaftesbury's schools for the poor, temperance movements and suffrage for the poor. He preached against slavery, imperialism and war. Moreover, on a personal level, he spent one day a week going door to door with a Bible and a pocket full of shillings ministering to the community.<sup>143</sup>

David Nelson Duke argued that theology grounded Spurgeon's response to the social ills of London. Specifically, Duke maintained that Spurgeon's actions are traceable to three theological pillars: absolute devotion to God in Christ; the salvation of individual souls; and the belief that a distinct Christian character develops from the new nature found in Christ.<sup>144</sup>

By "absolute devotion to Christ," Spurgeon meant living and acting in a way that glorifies God and extends His kingdom. In applying this principle to social ills, Spurgeon said, "Be on the side of temperance and sobriety; be on the side of peace and of justice; be on the side of everything that is according to the mind of God, and according to the law of love."<sup>145</sup> Elsewhere he proclaimed that, "God grant that the day may come when the mischievous division between the secular and the religious things be no more heard of, for in all things Christians are to glorify God."<sup>146</sup> For Spurgeon, this extended into the realm of politics. He reasoned that Christians should use even their citizenship for Christ's glory.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> For additional insights on Spurgeon's and the Tabernacle's activities, see Robert Shindler, *The Life and Legacy of Charles Haddon Spurgeon: From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit* (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1892), 269–70; Kathleen Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of Their Social Work in the Victorian Era* (London: Geoffrey Boles, 1962); and Albert Roger Meredith, "The Social and Political Views of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1834 – 1892" (PhD diss., Michigan State, 1973), Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1973, 175–76.

<sup>144</sup> Duke, 47.

<sup>145</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Present Crisis" (sermon, July 13, 1879), *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1972), 25:391.

<sup>146</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Candle" (sermon, April 24, 1881), *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, (Pasadena TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1972), 27:226.

<sup>147</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Peacemaker" (sermon, December 8, 1861), *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1972), 7:593.

Though Spurgeon was premillennial, his Christianity was not otherworldly. Christians were meant to glorify God by obeying Him in life; the commands to feed and clothe the poor or care for widows and orphans could hardly be fulfilled in heaven. They must be obeyed in the world where these evils exist.<sup>148</sup> As Duke put it, for Spurgeon, "Care for one's fellow human beings was not a secondary item for Christians, something to be done if time remained after church activities and private devotions. It was a daily obligation commanded by God, a duty one abandons at one's eternal peril." He then cited Spurgeon, "The chief business of one whom God has called is that he should live as the elect of God."<sup>149</sup> It is hardly surprising Spurgeon named his magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel, a Record of Combat with Sin and Labor for the Lord*.

Duke calls Spurgeon's second pillar, "concern for the salvation of individual souls." The key to understanding this lies in what Spurgeon meant by salvation. Spurgeon was a thoroughgoing Calvinist. To use theological terms, Spurgeon was not interested in mere justification; he was interested in justification and sanctification. Speaking to a group of people converted under Moody's ministry, he remarked, "Salvation from hell is not the salvation they ought to cry after, but salvation from sin."<sup>150</sup> For Spurgeon salvation involved the transformation of the person. Consequently, Spurgeon was not given to counting converts or devising methods to get professions of faith. Rather, Spurgeon was concerned with the totality of a person's life.<sup>151</sup>

Moreover, Spurgeon saw the poor as the focus of evangelism. In a sermon from January 1857 entitled "Preaching for the Poor" Spurgeon said, "It is a mark of Christ's

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<sup>148</sup> Duke, 48. The Spurgeon quote is from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Present Religion" (sermon, May, 1858), *The New Park Street Pulpit* (Pasadena TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), 4:253-4.

<sup>149</sup> Spurgeon, "The Candle," 222.

<sup>150</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 241.

<sup>151</sup> Duke, 49.

gospel that the poor are gospelized—that they can receive the gospel. True it is, the gospel affects all ranks, and is equally adapted to all; but yet we say; ‘If one class can be more prominent than another, we believe that in the Holy Scripture the poor are most of all appealed to.’”<sup>152</sup> Later, speaking to the men at his Pastor’s College, he said, “The world is full of grinding poverty, and crushing sorrow; shame and death are a portion of thousands, and it needs a great gospel to meet the dire necessities. Do you doubt it? Go and see for yourself.”<sup>153</sup>

This helps explain Spurgeon’s decision to found an orphanage, his zeal for relief for the poor, and his support of Gladstone’s Liberal party.<sup>154</sup> Although he had been a moderate imbiber of alcohol, Spurgeon came to back abstinence.<sup>155</sup> However, the most striking illustration of his concern for individual souls was his response to war. He believed war diverted resources away from children and the poor.<sup>156</sup> Further, the carnage appalled him. Although not a pacifist, his criticism of war was graphic and visceral.

... ever see a man’s head smashed, or his bowels ripped open?

Why if you are made of flesh and blood, the sight of one poor wounded man, with the blood oozing out of him will make you

feel sick... Where’s your hearts [sic] if you can think of broken

legs, splintered bones, heads smashed in, brains blown out,

bowels torn, hearts gushing with gore, ditches full of blood, and

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<sup>152</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Preaching for the Poor” (sermon, January 25, 1857), *The New Park Street Pulpit* (Pasadena TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), 3:63.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted by R. J. Helmstadter, “Spurgeon in Outcast London,” *The View From the Pulpit: Victorian Ministers in Society*, ed. P. T. Phillips (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), 161.

<sup>154</sup> Albert Roger Meredith, “Spurgeon,” 57-58.

<sup>155</sup> This quote reflects Spurgeon’s view: “I hope the Society will do something when it is started. I don’t want you to wear a lot of peacock feathers and putty medals, nor to be always trying to convert the moderate drinkers, but go in for winning the real drunkards, and bring the poor enslaved creatures to the feet of Jesus, who can give them liberty.” Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrauld, *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography*, (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1899), 4:70.

<sup>156</sup> Duke, 50-51.

heaps of limbs and carcasses of mangled men? Do you say my language is disgusting? How much more disgusting must the things themselves be? And you make them!... [the souls of soldiers] are as precious in God's sight as yours, they suffer as much pain when bullets pierce them as ever you do; they have homes and mothers and sisters... Before the deep curses of widows and orphans fall on you from the throne of God, put up your butcher knives and patent men-killers, and repent.<sup>157</sup>

Spurgeon's comments echo Moody's. In both cases, these men were not merely engaging in hyperbole; their comments were based on firsthand experience. Moody saw the slaughter of the American Civil War. Spurgeon spent time visiting prisoners and the wounded from both sides during the Franco-Prussian War.

Spurgeon's third theological pillar was the belief that a distinct Christian character develops from the new nature found in Christ. Spurgeon conceived of Christianity as an inside-out religion. On this point, Spurgeon's affinity with the Puritans is evident. He believed that Christian practice is the inevitable product of Christian conversion, and that those who are truly converted will live the faith. Functionally this meant that true Christians love their neighbours.<sup>158</sup> As he explained in a sermon:

Many of the sermons of Christ—and what sermons shall compare with them—have not what is now currently called "the gospel" in them at all. Our Saviour did not every time he stood up to preach declare the doctrine of election, or of atonement, or of effectual

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<sup>157</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "John Ploughman's Letter on War," *The Sword and Trowel* (August 1870), 353-55. Both Moody and Spurgeon had first hand experience with war. Both express disdain for war, note Moody's comments from earlier in the chapter.

<sup>158</sup> Duke, 51-54.

calling, or of final perseverance. No, he just as frequently spoke upon the duties of human life, and upon those precious fruits of the Spirit which are begotten in us by the grace of God. Mark this word that I have just uttered. You may find I am correct in stating that very much of our Saviour's time was occupied in telling the people what they ought to do towards one another... <sup>159</sup>

These theological beliefs drove Spurgeon's social actions. Thus, while Spurgeon was an individualist and a social conservative, he was ultimately a follower of the Bible. Spurgeon maintained that poverty was the product of individual moral failing. He was certainly no social engineer. However, he knew what the Bible said about wealth, justice, widows and orphans. Consequently, Spurgeon spoke to these issues. He warned against equating wealth with righteousness. <sup>160</sup> He railed against the treatment of the poor. "Think," Spurgeon exclaimed, "how the poor are oppressed and ground down with awful poverty in many parts of this great city. Shall not God avenge the cry of starving women?"<sup>161</sup> Addressing the issue of suffrage, he said, "...whenever topics which touch upon the rights of men, righteousness, peace, and so on, come in my way, I endeavour to speak emphatically as I can on the right side. It is part of my religion to desire justice and freedom for all."<sup>162</sup>

Spurgeon is particularly instructive for understanding Moody. Moody deeply admired Spurgeon, and Spurgeon was someone he read regularly. Spurgeon functioned as a model for belief and practice for Moody. They were kindred spirits in their premillennialism, and when Moody was challenged on his premillennialism, he

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<sup>159</sup> Quoted in Meredith, 175-76.

<sup>160</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Prosperous Man's Reminder" (sermon, October 27, 1878), *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1972), 24:606.

<sup>161</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Israel and Britain: A Note of Warning" (sermon, June 7, 1885), *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, (Pasadena TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1973), 31:322.

<sup>162</sup> Spurgeon and Harrald, 132.



appealed to Spurgeon.<sup>163</sup> Moody saw Spurgeon working among the poor of London, while maintaining that evangelism must be the priority of ministry. Moody knew Spurgeon believed social change could only be effected by mass conversions. Moody observed Spurgeon's commitment to the Bible and the way Spurgeon sought personally to apply its teaching about the poor. Moody read and heard Spurgeon's insistence on the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, especially in regard to ministry. Therefore, as we shall see, it should not be surprising that many of Moody's ministries would hearken back to what he saw during his times with Spurgeon, especially Moody's emphasis on conversion, the Holy Spirit and the poor.<sup>164</sup>

#### 4. The Mildmay Conference and William Pennefather

Moody was also introduced to the Mildmay Conference in England during this trip. Seeing a need for prayer in London, Moody proceeded to start a noon prayer meeting. Through these prayer meetings, he was brought into contact with the Mildmay Conference. The conferences, an annual meeting for Christian workers, were the result of the work of William Pennefather. Pennefather, an Irish Anglican and nephew of John Darby, was the minister of St. Jude's Mildmay Park. The conferences brought Moody into contact with most of the evangelical Anglicans in London, as well as nonconformists. One of his most important contacts was R. C. Morgan. Morgan was a nonconformist who ran a periodical entitled *The Revival*, that later became *The Christian*. Morgan's support through the magazine would be crucial during Moody's

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<sup>163</sup> Daniels, *Moody: His Word*, 475.

<sup>164</sup> The sign outside Moody's church in Chicago read, "Ever welcome to this house of God are strangers and the poor." John Pollock, *Moody: the Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), 53. There is one striking difference between Moody's and Spurgeon's Sunday schools. In a letter to Farwell, Moody wrote, "I was at Spurgeon's Sabbath School and it is not as good as the mission on the corner of Michigan and Dearborn streets. They had no paint on the rooms, dark and gloomy. They have no way to heat them, and I inquired if it were not cold. They said it was sometimes but they got it full of breath etc., and warmed up the people, nonventilation, only windows. . . I then went to Newman Hall's church and Sabbath schoolrooms . . . they had a partition up so the boys will not see the girls. The rooms are dirty many of the seats are of plain boards, no backs to them . . ." D. L. Moody, letter to Farwell, 12 March 1867, Biographical Files, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL; May 2.

1873–1875 campaign. In addition, Moody later invested in R.C. Morgan’s British publishing firm Morgan and Scott, which issued his sermons.<sup>165</sup>

The Mildmay Conference influenced Moody in three ways. First, it reinforced his emerging premillennialism. One of the themes of the conference was the impending return of Christ and the urgency for Christian service and personal holiness, themes that would be prevalent in Moody’s work. Second, it provided a model for the Northfield Conferences Moody organized in 1880.<sup>166</sup> By observing Mildmay, Moody was convinced of the value of conferences and learned how to develop similar ones. Third, the Mildmay conferences provided ideas for women’s religious education. Specifically, Moody was impressed with Pennefether’s work establishing an order of deaconesses in the Church of England. These women served among the poor by providing practical help and conducting Bible studies. The idea of training women for practical missions stayed with Moody, and when he returned to Chicago he was instrumental in forming a similar endeavour there.<sup>167</sup> These experiences and his early conversations with General O. O. Howard were the origins of what would become a growing desire for women’s religious education.<sup>168</sup>

Moody met Pennefather in a subsequent trip to Great Britain in 1872. Pennefather, then fifty-seven, deeply impressed the thirty-five year old Moody. This would be their only meeting. Later Moody would say, “I well remember sitting in yonder seat looking up at this platform and seeing the beloved Mr. Pennefather’s face illuminated as it were with Heaven’s light. I don’t think I can recall a word that he said, but the whole atmosphere of the man breathed holiness... I thank God that I saw and

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<sup>165</sup> Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody*, 364.

<sup>166</sup> David Bebbington, “Transatlantic,” 4-5.

<sup>167</sup> Dorsett, 165. The woman Moody chose to spearhead the effort was Emma Dryer. Dryer and this early work with women in Chicago were instrumental in the formation of what later would be known as Moody Bible Institute. These events will be further discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>168</sup> As has been noted, Moody’s first school was for women: The Northfield Seminary for Women, founded in 1879.

spoke with that holy man; no one could see him without the consciousness that he lived in the presence of God.”<sup>169</sup>

The younger Moody also impressed Pennefather. Pennefather believed London was in need of revival and Moody was the man to lead it. Consequently, he wrote Moody asking him to return. Pennefather’s letter would be the impetus for the 1873–1875 revival.

### C. Eighteen Seventy One

*“‘What a Mistake!’ he said in relating the story to a large audience on the twenty-second anniversary of the great fire in that city in 1871, ‘I have never dared to think to give an audience a week to think of their salvation since.’”*

—Dwight Moody, 1893<sup>170</sup>

*“Ah, what a day!— I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it, it is almost too sacred an experience to name—Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years—I can only say God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand.”*

—Dwight Moody <sup>171</sup>

Eighteen seventy one was a difficult but defining year for Moody. By the end of the year, Moody would have a renewed focus that would drive the rest of his life. The focus came as a result of two very difference but powerful events: the great Chicago Fire and a powerful personal religious experience.

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<sup>169</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 154.

<sup>170</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 145.

<sup>171</sup> Quoted in Dorsett, *Passion*, 257.

## 1. The Chicago Fire

The Chicago fire of 1871 was arguably the worst urban disaster of the nineteenth century. It burned from the morning of October 8 until the 10<sup>th</sup>. On the evening of the fire, Moody was conducting a meeting in Chicago. Approximately 2,500 people were in attendance. Moody preached on Pilate from Matthew 27:22, "What then shall I do with Jesus which is called the Christ?" As the meeting came to an end, Moody challenged his listeners, saying they had a week before the next meeting to decide for Christ. The meeting ended with a hymn during which many noticed the sounds of fire engines.<sup>172</sup>

The Chicago fire department proved to be no match for the fire raging through the city. By the time it was over, Chicago had been decimated. Property damages were estimated at over \$190 million. Over 100,000 people were homeless, about one-third of the city's population. The fire had consumed over three and a half square miles of the city, making it twice the size of the 1666 London fire. Eighteen thousand buildings and fifty churches and missions were reduced to ashes.

The coroner reported finding 127 bodies. However, this count was far from accurate as many were simply incinerated, leaving no trace of their demise. Additionally, many others drowned in the Chicago River or Lake Michigan trying to avoid the conflagration. Most of these bodies were never recovered. City officials finally estimated the total death toll to be around three hundred. This was also guesswork; many of the dead came from the poorest areas of the city where records were sketchy at best. Further, many were immigrants, some with no family ties.<sup>173</sup>

Moody survived the conflagration, but not unscathed. Although he and his family escaped harm, his ministry did not fare as well. The YMCA and the Sunday

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<sup>172</sup> Sweeting in George, *Mr. Moody*, 43.

<sup>173</sup> Daniel Miller, *City of the Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 142-71. I am dependent on Miller's description of the fire.

School were both destroyed and his own home was claimed by the flames. His daughter Emma recalled Moody poking through the ashes of the house with his cane and finding only a toy iron stove of hers.<sup>174</sup>

The net effect of the fire on Moody was threefold.<sup>175</sup> First, Moody no longer was bound to Chicago. In a sense, he was now free to pursue a much larger venue in which to ply his skills. Second, it brought a new urgency to his evangelism. He described his handling of the meeting the night of the fire as one of the biggest mistakes of his ministry career. Moody often wondered how many of those 2,500 people died that night or the next day in the fire. He later said, "I want to tell you of the one lesson I learned that night: ...that is, when I preach, I press Christ upon the people then and there and try to bring them to a decision on the spot. I would rather have that right hand cut off than to give an audience now a week to decide what to do with Jesus."<sup>176</sup> Third, it provided focus. Moody began to concentrate on evangelism. One of his later sermons reflected this commitment, "Concentrate your life upon some one thing and it will cut a channel so deep that your influence will be felt."<sup>177</sup>

## **2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

Immediately after the fire, Moody threw himself into the work of raising funds for the rebuilding of his church and the YMCA. A letter from New York dated November 24, 1871, typified the kinds of monetary appeals Moody was making. In the letter, Moody described the "sad state of things in Chicago so far as the spiritual work." He wrote of churches and missions in ashes, including his own work. Reflecting his own difficulties, he stated, "I have no earthly possessions and apply to those in sympathy with God's work who have the means of helping." He concluded his appeal,

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<sup>174</sup> Pollock, *Moody*, 107.

<sup>175</sup> Sweeting in George, *Mr. Moody*, 39-48. Although others have pointed out the role the Chicago fire played in Moody's life, I am particularly indebted to Sweeting's interpretation of this event.

<sup>176</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 145.

<sup>177</sup> Richard S. Rhodes, *Moody's Latest Sermons* (Chicago: Rhodes & McClure, 1998), 680-81.

“My plan is to raise \$50,000 and put up a Tabernacle to accommodate seven or eight burnt out missions.”<sup>178</sup>

Eventually Moody went to New York personally to raise funds. While there, Moody began to struggle spiritually. Although he received generous support from many in New York, he remarked, “My heart was not in the work of begging, I could not appeal.”<sup>179</sup> Along with the external effect of the fire, Moody was struggling internally. William describes his father as, “...crying all the time that God would fill [him] with His Spirit.”<sup>180</sup> A close confidant wrote later in his diary, “...for a year or more before Moody left for Chicago he was continually burdened and crying to God for more power...”<sup>181</sup> Looking back on that time later, Moody described himself as being in a “cold state.” He felt that, “it did not seem as if there was any unction resting on his ministry.” Moody talked of God “just showing me myself” over a period of four months. He confessed to “preaching for ambition” rather than “preaching for Christ.” He concluded, “For four months a restling went on in me. I was a miserable man.”<sup>182</sup>

Moody’s rhetoric bears a striking resemblance to Spurgeon’s exhortations and denotes Spurgeon’s influence on Moody. Specifically, Moody’s self-professed lack of unction and power hearken back to Spurgeon’s assertion that much ministry was ultimately useless because it was not being done in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Baptist preacher from London cast a long shadow over the American evangelist.

Ironically, while the staunchly Calvinist Spurgeon shaped Moody’s understanding of his spiritual burden, two Free Methodist women from Chicago were instrumental in the lifting of that burden. The two women, Sarah Cooke and Mrs. W. R.

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<sup>178</sup> A copy of this letter is in the archives of the Moody Bible Institute.

<sup>179</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 149.

<sup>180</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 149.

<sup>181</sup> Whittle Diary, September 4, 1875, Dorsett indicates the diary was lost from the archives of Moody Bible Institute. However, during my research I found the diary. It is in the United States National Archives in Washington, D. C.

<sup>182</sup> Transcribed document entitled D. L. Moody on Anointing in 1875, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

Haxwurst, attended a Free Methodist camp meeting during the summer of 1871. During one of the meetings Cooke reported that "a burden came upon me for Mr. Moody, that the Lord would give him the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire."<sup>183</sup> After listening to Moody preach for a period of weeks, they approached him and told him, "We have been praying for you." Somewhat miffed Moody replied, "Why don't you pray for the people?" Their response was "Because you need the power of the Spirit." Moody recalled thinking, "I need the power! Why," said Mr. Moody, "I thought I had power. I had the largest congregations in Chicago, and there were many conversions. I was in a sense satisfied."<sup>184</sup>

However, the women kept up their prayer vigil and constantly urged him to seek special power from the Holy Spirit.<sup>185</sup> Eventually, persuaded of their sincerity, Moody agreed to sit down with the women. According to Torrey, the women introduced Moody to the concept of baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>186</sup> Because of that conversation, Moody agreed to pray with the women concerning the matter. He described the event in the following manner: "There came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was. I began to cry out, as I never did before. I really felt that I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service."<sup>187</sup> Cooke described Moody as being in such great agony "that he rolled on the floor and in the midst of many tears and groans cried to God to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire."<sup>188</sup>

This all finally came to a head in New York. Moody described the event as follows:

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<sup>183</sup> Sarah Cooke, *Wayside Sketches: or, The Handmaiden of the Lord* (Grand Rapids: Shaw, 1895), 393.

<sup>184</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 146. See also R. A. Torrey, *Why God used D. L. Moody* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1923), 45-46.

<sup>185</sup> Cooke, 393.

<sup>186</sup> R. A. Torrey, *Why God used D. L. Moody* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1923), 45, 46.

<sup>187</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1930), 147.

<sup>188</sup> Cooke, 393.

It came upon me as I was walking in the streets of New York.

Many a time I have thought of it since I have been here

(England). At last I had returned to God again and was wretched

no longer. I almost prayed in my joy, 'Stay Thy hand' I thot this

earthen vessel would break. He filled me so full of the spirit. If I

had not been a different man since I do not know myself. I think I

have accomplished more in the past four years than in all my life.

But oh it was preceded by a wrestling and a struggle . . . There

was a time when I wanted to see my little vineyard, Chicago,

blessed and I could not get out of it. But I could work for the

whole world now. I would like to go around the world and tell the

perishing millions of a Savior's love.<sup>189</sup>

Moody's experience was just the cusp of a burgeoning wave among evangelicals in the United States in the late nineteenth-century. C. I. Scofield would remark at the end of the century, "... within the last twenty years more has been written and said upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than in the preceding eighteen hundred years."<sup>190</sup> While certainly an exaggeration, Scofield's claim accurately reflects what was happening among evangelicals from the late nineteenth-century until the First World War.<sup>191</sup>

As American evangelical interest in the work of the Holy Spirit developed, different positions began to emerge. Most evangelicals believed in a work of the Holy Spirit after conversion that was usually referred to as "baptism in the Holy Spirit."

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<sup>189</sup> Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>190</sup> C. I. Scofield, *Plain Papers on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Fleming Revell, 1899), 9.

<sup>191</sup> Grant Wacker, "The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880-1910," *The Journal of American History*, 72, no. 1 (Jun., 1985), 45-62. Wacker argues convincingly that the interest in the Holy Spirit combined with a shared anxiety about the state of the church helps explain the continued cooperation of liberals and conservatives throughout the nineteenth century. He also shows the intense interest in the Holy Spirit.



However, they disagreed in the meaning or purpose of this baptism. One group argued the purpose of the baptism was for holiness or for eradication of sin. This position reflected the idea of personal purity or perfectionism, and was rooted in the teaching of John Wesley. A second group, sometimes referred to as higher life or Keswick theology, maintained that the purpose for baptism in the Holy Spirit was power for service.<sup>192</sup> This group was predominantly rooted in the Reformed tradition.<sup>193</sup> By the end of the 1880s, these two were engaged in a strenuous battle for supremacy.<sup>194</sup>

As Moody indicated, this event, along with the fire, was the impetus for his expanding his ministry beyond Chicago. It was the last step in his decision to become a travelling evangelist. His experience also fused Spurgeon's teaching on the necessity of the Holy Spirit for effective ministry with the conception of baptism in the Holy Spirit and brought him into the vortex of the swirling debates among evangelicals about the Holy Spirit's work<sup>195</sup>

## D. Conclusion

As Moody looked to 1873, he determined to head to the United Kingdom. By the time he left, his theology was in place. It had been formed initially in the United States by the Christian charity he experienced as boy in Northfield from the young Oliver Everett. Through the ministry of Edward Kirk in Boston, he was exposed to the

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<sup>192</sup> David Bundy, "Keswick and the Experience of evangelical Piety," *Modern Christian Revivals*, ed. Edith Blumhofer and Randall Balmer (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993); and J.C. Pollock, *The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964). The name "Keswick" is derived from the name of an English town where annual religious conferences have been held since 1875. The conference emphasized holy living without teaching perfectionism. Its origins were in: the American Wesleyan Holiness movement; the work of Charles Finney, Phoebe Palmer, and Asa Mahan; the writings of Charles Boardman; and the Mildmay Conferences.

<sup>193</sup> Charles W. Nienkirchen, *A.B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992). There are nuances between these two positions. For example, A. B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, explicitly denied perfectionism, but embraced all the charismatic gifts. However, he denied any charismatic gifts were a necessary test of the Spirit's baptism.

<sup>194</sup> Wacker, "Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age," 47, 48. Moody, as we have seen, was connected with the Mildmay conferences which were one of the forerunners of the Keswick movement. In the next chapter I will discuss Moody's interaction with Keswick.

<sup>195</sup> This will be developed in the next chapter.

revivalist evangelical tradition. The spectre of the Civil War, and the nineteenth-century phenomena of urbanization, especially in Chicago, provided the context in which Moody synthesized these ideas. Moody's experience as a Christian worker with various nonsectarian evangelical movements and his personal relationships with men like O. O. Howard and John Farwell also contributed to this thinking. Moody's first trip to England added premillennialism, a conservative view of the Bible and a new approach to Bible study learned from the Plymouth Brethren and the redoubtable Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon. Evangelicals in Britain also provided an opportunity for Moody to observe different types of ministries that he would seek to replicate later in his life. In short, British evangelicalism reinforced what he learned in America while adding new theological ideas and ministry models that would be a part of Moody's work for the rest of his life. The Chicago fire would bring focus to Moody's life and this focus was energized by a second powerful religious experience. With all of this in place, Moody set sail for Great Britain. By the time he returned, Moody would be one of the most famous men in the English-speaking world.

#### IV. MOODY'S THEOLOGY

*"If a man should ask me up to his house for dinner tomorrow, the street would be a very good thing to take me to his house. But if I didn't get into the house, I wouldn't get any dinner. Now a creed is the road or street. It is very good as far as it goes, but if it doesn't take us to Christ it is worthless... Faith [is] in a person, and that person is Christ. It isn't a creed about him, but it is himself."*

—Dwight Moody

*"He keeps close to the essentials, and is free from such crotchets as often narrow the sphere and destroy the influence of evangelists...he has stuck to simple old truths..."<sup>2</sup>*

—E. J. Goodspeed

*"Some people would smash up a work like this in 24 hours. I have not come to preach this or that doctrine; I preach 'the whosoever.' Some are always asking, 'why I don't specifically preach election or sanctification or baptism' or this or that. I would say to them, 'Why don't you go and preach them yourselves?'"<sup>3</sup>*

—Dwight Moody

The previous chapters examined the various factors that went into forming Moody's theology. Special attention was paid to contexts, individuals and movements that shaped Moody's faith. In this chapter, there will be no attempt to sum up all of Moody's theological convictions or even place Moody relative to other evangelicals of his day. Rather, this chapter will focus on those parts of Moody's doctrine that drove his social vision. Those doctrines will be examined in detail, with the next chapter given to a demonstration of how these doctrines manifested themselves in Moody's social vision and social work. As such, this chapter seeks to explicate fully the theological foundation for Moody's social vision.

Moody is a very difficult figure to categorize theologically. He was not given to credalism, denominationalism or theological speculation, seeking rather to concentrate

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<sup>1</sup> "Moody Talks of Faith," Journal (New Bedford, MA.), undated clipping, probably 1895, *Moodyana Collection*, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL. As in previous chapters, Moody's quotes are unedited.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (Cleveland: C. C. Wick, 1876), 107-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Signs of Our Times* (March 10, 1875), 149; cf. Shanks, ed., *College Students at Northfield* (1888), 217-18.

on practical religion.<sup>4</sup> Further, Moody was primarily an evangelist. As his son William pointed out, Moody "... preferred to devote his energies to evangelistic work, yielding to the denominational churches the function of indoctrinating the Christian faith."<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, some have opined that Moody was either indifferent to theology, did not like it, or possessed little of it.<sup>6</sup> However, this is simply not true. Moody did not believe that sincere faith alone was sufficient. He believed that faith must also have the correct object. This is where doctrine came into play. For example, at Northfield in 1899 he made the following statement:

People have an idea now that it makes very little difference what a man believes if he is only sincere, if he is only honest in his creed. I have had that question put to me many a time: "Mr. Moody, you don't think it makes any difference what a man believes if he is only sincere?" I believe that is one of the greatest lies that ever came out of the pit of hell. Why they virtually say you can believe a lie just as well as you can believe the truth, if only you are earnest, you know and stick to it.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, as early as the 1870s Moody had preached sermons that laid out his concept of faith, which followed a traditional approach: knowledge, intellectual assent and trust—what he referred to as "laying hold."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> By practical I mean Moody was more interested in the practical matters of converting sinners and discipling converts rather than theological speculation. It is practicality within the sphere of revivalist concerns.

<sup>5</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 107.

<sup>6</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*. Gundry summarizes the various theories on Moody's attitude towards theology on pages 62-70.

<sup>7</sup> "Addresses delivered by Mr. D. L. Moody, General Conference, Saturday Evening, August 12, 1899," typed manuscript, Moody Bible Institute Archives, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Dwight Moody, *Wondrous Love* (London: J. E. Hawkins, 1875), 261-64; D. L. Moody, *Glad Tidings: Comprising Sermons and Prayer-Meeting Talks delivered at the N. Y. Hippodrome* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1876) 270-73.

Consequently, by closely examining the life and work of Moody, a basic theological framework emerges. For our purposes, I will not attempt to provide a thorough survey of Moody's theology. Rather, in this chapter, I will concentrate on six basic elements that framed his social vision and work. First, Moody evidenced a profound understanding of the love of God. This was a core belief that became a kind of defining doctrine for Moody. Second, Moody aggressively pursued a non-sectarian approach to religion. This was part of his strategy to broaden the impact of the gospel. It also reflected his concept of love. Third, he demonstrated a deep commitment to the Bible and a literal hermeneutic. While Moody did not have a highly developed and nuanced doctrine of the Bible, he clearly revered it and sought to make it normative in his life and work. Fourth, he embraced the revivalist evangelical tradition. Specifically, Moody's basic theological construct was the "Three Rs": Ruined by sin, Redeemed by Christ, and Regenerated by the Holy Ghost. This revivalism underscored his concept of conversion and put him in line with past evangelical revivalists. The final two doctrines, the Holy Spirit's role in Christian service and premillennialism, served to separate him from earlier generations of revivalists.

#### **A. The Love of God**

*"The sun is light, and can't help shining; God is Love, and he can't help loving."<sup>9</sup>*

—Dwight Moody

*"Love was the motive of his life, the essence of his religion, the center of his message, the incentive of his achievement and the secret of his power."<sup>10</sup>*

—John McDowell

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<sup>9</sup> Daniels, *Moody: Words*, 262.

<sup>10</sup> John McDowell, *What D. L. Moody Means to Me: An Anthology of Appreciation and Appraisals of the Beloved Founder of the Northfield Schools* (East Northfield, Massachusetts: The Northfield Schools, 1937), 17.

The love of God was a central theme of Moody's evangelistic preaching.<sup>11</sup> It was arguably the central theme of his life. In fact, as we shall see, love was the central tenet of his social vision. His doctrine of God's love hearkened back to what he saw and heard from Everett, Moorhouse and Mueller, and what he experienced in 1871. It was also grounded in the Bible.

Moody believed the central attribute of the Godhead is Love. He wrote of the Holy Spirit,

We read that the fruit of the Spirit is love. God is love, Christ is love... What a blessed attribute is this. May I call it the dome of the temple of the graces. Better still, it is the crown of crowns worn by the Triune God. Human love is a natural emotion which flows forth towards the object of our affections. But Divine love is as high above human love as the heaven is above the earth. The natural man is of the earth, earthly, and however pure his love may be, it is weak and imperfect at best. But the love of God is perfect and entire, wanting nothing. It is as a mighty ocean in its greatness, dwelling with and flowing from the Eternal Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

For Dwight Moody, the God of the Bible was preeminently love.<sup>13</sup> When he described heaven, he talked of the souls of the departed as drinking "from the living streams of

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<sup>11</sup> Gundry's *Love Them In* is the definitive work on Moody's theology. As the title indicates, Gundry sees love as the central theme in Moody's preaching. See also Darrel B. Robertson, "The Chicago Revival, 1876: A Case Study in the Social Function of a Nineteenth-Century Revival" (Ph. D. dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1982), 221.

<sup>12</sup> Dwight Moody, *Secret Power: or the secret of success in Christian Life and Work* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1881), 10.

<sup>13</sup> This is a recurring theme in Moody's preaching. See for example the sermons entitled, "How God Loves Men" and "God Hates Sin and Loves the Sinner." Both were preached regularly and can be found in Dwight Moody, *New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers by Dwight Lyman Moody* (Chicago: Thompson & Wakefield, 1877), 165-80.

love that roll by God's high throne."<sup>14</sup> Again, in the same work, he reiterated this point: "Another want that we feel here is love. Heaven is the only place where the conditions of love can be fulfilled."<sup>15</sup>

Moody saw the work of the Holy Spirit as predominantly displaying the love of God. Findlay wrote, "For Moody the third person of the Trinity manifested himself in the world chiefly as the love of God shining in and through individual Christian lives. As he once put it: "You can sum up all the fruits of the Spirit in one word—Love."<sup>16</sup>

Moody believed that love is a critical Christian virtue. He wrote, "Love is the badge that Christ gave His disciples. Some put on one sort of badge and some another... But love is the only badge by which the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are known."<sup>17</sup> Moody believed the first impulse of a young convert is to love. It is also one of the first effects of conversion. In his words, "Do you remember the day you were converted? Was not your heart full of sweet peace and love?"<sup>18</sup>

Moody's comments on I Corinthians 13 illustrated the importance he placed on the virtue of love,

I would recommend all Christians to read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians constantly, abiding in it day and night, not spending a night or a day there, but just go in there and spend all our time — summer and winter, twelve months in the year, then the power of Christ and Christianity would be felt as it never has been in the history of the world.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Dwight Moody, *Heaven: Where it is, Its inhabitants, and How to Get There* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revel, 1884), 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>16</sup> Findlay, *Moody*, 237. He references Romans 5:5 as grounds for his belief. Dwight Moody, *Secret Power: or the secret of success in Christian Life and Work* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revel, 1881), 12.

<sup>17</sup> Dwight Moody, *Secret Power*, 50.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

Elsewhere he wrote, “The first of the graces spoken of in Galatians, and the last mentioned in Peter, is charity or love.”<sup>20</sup>

Writing to the Chicago Avenue Church, he pleaded with its members to make love central in the life of the congregation. He wrote, “I found a verse in I Peter, iv. 8, today. I never saw it before: ‘Above all things put on love.’ He went on to urge them, “Think much of that one expression. Put it at the head of the list. Faith is good, but this is above it. Truth is good: but what are we if we do not have love? May the dear church get such a flood of love from on high that it will fill all our hearts.”<sup>21</sup>

He expressed frustration with the evangelical church’s lack of emphasis on this virtue. He wrote, “Now in this age, ever since I can remember, the Church has been very jealous about men being unsound in the faith. If a man becomes unsound in the faith, they draw their ecclesiastical sword and cut at him; but he may be ever so unsound in love, and they don’t say anything.”<sup>22</sup>

He addressed this again in a personal letter written to the Rev. Dr. W. J. Erdman, pastor of the Chicago Avenue Church. “I do hope you will hold the people to the thought of love. I am sure that is where the churches have all gone astray. We must have it above all things. Let us put that first. If the church is sound in love I think it will be sound in everything else.”<sup>23</sup>

As we shall shortly see, work was also among the core principles Moody emphasized, but it was subservient to love, which provided the only sound basis for work. Moody made this point emphatically and repeatedly. One of his most widely published sermons was simply entitled, “To the Work! To the Work!” In this sermon Moody proclaimed,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>21</sup> William Moody, *Life of Moody*, 151.

<sup>22</sup> Dwight Moody, *Secret Power*, 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> William Moody, *Life of Moody*, 151.



It is not always more work that we want so much as a better motive. Many of us do a good deal of work, but we must remember that God looks at the motive. The only tree on this earth that can produce fruit that is pleasing to God is the tree of love.<sup>24</sup>

Elsewhere, commenting on Romans 5:5, he reiterated the point, emphasizing the unique need for love in ministry. He maintained that a person may find success in law or medicine or business without love, but “no man can be a co-worker with God without love. If our service is mere profession on our part, the quicker we renounce it the better. If a man takes up God’s work as he would take up any profession, the sooner he gets out of it the better.”<sup>25</sup> Again, in a sermon published under the title, “Charity,” Moody argued that many ministers, despite having great preaching skills, lacked converts in their ministry because they did not have love as their motive. As he put it, “A man though he is deep in learning and theology, if he has no love in his heart, he will do no good.” Moody then concluded,

Is love the motive power that urges us to go out and work for God? This is the first question we ought to ask ourselves.

Without it, a great deal of work will go for naught. The work will be swept away like chaff without it. Christ looks down and examines our hearts and actions, and although our deeds may be great in the eyes of the world, they may not be in His eyes.<sup>26</sup>

Moody reemphasized this point in 1881 in a work tellingly titled, *Secret Power: or the secret of success in Christian Life and Work*.

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<sup>24</sup> D. L. Moody, *To The Work! To The Work!* (Chicago: Revell, 1884), 28.

<sup>25</sup> Dwight Moody, *Secret Power*, 10-11.

<sup>26</sup> Dwight Moody, *The Gospel Awakening* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1883), 379-80.

We cannot work for God without love. If I have no love for God nor for my fellow man, then I cannot work acceptably. We are told that the “love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” Now, if we have had that love shed abroad in our hearts, we are ready for God’s service; if we have not, we are not ready. It is so easy to reach a man when you love him; all barriers are broken down and swept away.<sup>27</sup>

In this same work, Moody went on to claim that, “God cannot use many of His servants, because they are full of irritability and impatience; ... God cannot use them.” He concluded, “...their mouths are sealed; they cannot speak for Jesus Christ, and if they have not love, they cannot work for God.”<sup>28</sup>

Moody then went on to explain that by love, “I do not mean love for those that love me; it don’t take grace to do that.” He continued, “It takes the grace of God to love the man that lies about me, the man that slanders me, the man that is trying to tear down my character; it takes the grace of God to love that man.”<sup>29</sup> As Moody understood it, Christian love was the supernatural ability to love the unlovely, especially those who were his enemies.<sup>30</sup>

Moody believed this love was the product of the work of the Holy Spirit. As he put it, “the Holy Ghost is to impart love” and “The fruit of the Spirit, as you find it in Galatians, begins with love.” This love was supernatural in origin, so he cautioned against people, “trying to get this love; and ... trying to produce it of themselves. But therein all fail.” He maintained, “...when the Holy Spirit kindles love in your heart, you

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<sup>27</sup> Dwight Moody, *Secret Power*, 10-11.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>30</sup> “To love a man who thinks a great deal of you is natural love with every one, but to love those who hate you is a different thing, and whenever a man gets the Spirit he loves his enemies.” Dwight Moody, *The New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers* (New York: J. W. Goodspeed Publishers, 1880), 277.

cannot help loving God; it will be spontaneous,” and “[W]hen the Spirit of God comes into your heart and mine, it will be easy to serve God.” He concluded, “Some one comes along and treats us wrongly, perhaps we hate him; we have not attended to the means of grace and kept feeding on the word of God as we ought; a root of bitterness springs up in our hearts; then we are not qualified to work for God.”<sup>31</sup>

For Moody, love was a critical component in successful evangelism. As he explained it,

That is the key which unlocks the human heart. If I can prove to a man that I come to him out of pure love; if a mother shows by her actions that it is pure love that prompts her advising her boy to lead a different life, not a selfish love, but that it is for the glory of God, it won't be long before that mother's influence will be felt by that boy, and he will begin to think about this matter, because true love touches the heart quicker than anything else.<sup>32</sup>

In 1877, Moody exhorted his listeners, “Let the young men go plead with them, bring them to the Tabernacle, and don't let them go out without presenting the claims of Christ, and showing them His never-dying love.”<sup>33</sup> In the same year, he told the following story.

Look what that teacher did in Southern Illinois. She had taught a little girl to love the Savior, and the teacher said to her: “Can't you get your father to come to the Sunday-school?” This father was a swearing, drinking man, and the love of God was not in his heart. But under the tuition of that teacher the little girl went to

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<sup>31</sup> Dwight Moody, *Secret Power*, 13.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Dwight Moody, *New Sermons*, 19.

her father and told him of Jesus' love, and led him to that Sunday-school. What was the result? I heard before leaving for Europe that he had been instrumental in founding over 780 Sabbath-schools in Southern Illinois.<sup>34</sup>

Moody was unusual among revivalists in his lack of emphasis on God's wrath.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Moody placed God's wrath in the context of God's love. In his sermon "Love," he said, "It is because God loves the sinner that He gets angry with him," and God's anger "is one of the very strongest evidences and expressions of God's love."<sup>36</sup> This emphasis on love does not indicate that Moody denied the doctrine of eternal damnation, he simply found it unhelpful. He once remarked, "Terror never brought a man in yet."<sup>37</sup> Further, he saw love as God's method. Moody noted, "He (God) loves them in spite of their sin, and it is this love which, more than anything else, brings hard-hearted sinners to their knees."<sup>38</sup>

While Moody may not have believed the doctrine of hell had pragmatic value as an evangelistic tool, it did serve as a motivating factor for his own work. Preaching in the United Kingdom he admitted, "If I believed there was no Hell, I am sure I would be off to-morrow for America." He added, "You would not find me here, going from town to town, spending day and night preaching and proclaiming the Gospel, and urging men to escape the damnation of Hell."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 97-101. In this section, Gundry shows how Moody's approach differed from others. In fact, Gundry points out at least one Scottish preacher accused Moody of not believing in hell.

<sup>36</sup> Dwight Moody, *Glad Tidings*, 242-51.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 99.

<sup>38</sup> Daniels, *Moody: Words*, 106. Also, in one of his published sermons Moody said: "Mark you my friends, I believe in eternal damnation; I believe in the pit that burns, in the fire that's never quenched, in the worm that never dies, but I believe that the magnet that goes down to the bottom of the pit is the love of Jesus." Dwight Moody, *Great joy: comprising sermons and prayer-meeting talks, delivered at the Chicago Tabernacle* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1877), 359.

<sup>39</sup> John Page Hopps, *Mr. Moody's Late Sermon on Hell, Theological Tracts, 1770-1882*, British Library Archive, #4371 e34.

Practically, his conception of God's love shaped his approach to theological debates. Moody avoided using harsh critiques in theological debates, arguing, "Christ's teaching was always constructive."<sup>40</sup> Elsewhere, Moody claimed that Christians should follow Christ's example in dealing with error by largely ignoring it, thus: "...letting it melt away in the warm glow of the full intensity of truth expressed in love... Let us hold truth, but by all means let us hold it in love, not with a theological club."<sup>41</sup> For Moody, most, if not all of the issues of life, should be viewed through the prism of God's love.

### **B. Non-sectarianism**

*"For denominations he cared nothing; for Christianity he would give up his life. Every one believed in him, no matter of what faith or unfaith; all knew that Dwight L. Moody was an honest, sincere, devoted Christian."*<sup>42</sup>

—*The Independent*, December 28, 1899

*"I would like to know to what denomination the Savior would belong. I tell you, my friends, these denominational names do not come from on high. They are devises of the evil one."*<sup>43</sup>

—Dwight Moody

Moody's work was characterized by a dogged commitment to non-sectarianism. Three factors fed into this belief. First was his early experience with non-sectarian ministries, specifically the 1857–58 Revival, the Sunday School movement, and the

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 218.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 218.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Findlay, *Moody*, 421.

<sup>43</sup> "Third Annual Illinois State Christian Convention," *Advance*, II, no. 62 (Nov. 5, 1868), 2.

YMCA. Second was his commitment to the doctrine of love, and third was the trauma of losing his father.<sup>44</sup>

What Moody saw modelled as a young man in Boston and Chicago, became a matter of conviction for the mature evangelist. An 1876 article in *Scribner's* magazine described Moody's ideal mission: "It brings all the churches together upon common ground. The Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Methodist, the Episcopalian, sit on the same platform...They learn toleration for one another. More than this: they learn friendliness and love for one another. They light their torches at a common fire."<sup>45</sup>

One of Moody's reasons for non-sectarianism was his commitment to God's love. In fact, Moody believed sectarianism must be mitigated by the doctrine of God's love:

Oh, yes, let us sink this party feeling and contend for Christ only.

Oh, that God may so fill us with His love, and the love of souls, that no thought of minor sectarian parties can come in; that there may be no room for them in our atmosphere whatever; and that the Spirit of God may give us one mind and one spirit here to glorify His holy name.<sup>46</sup>

Further, in Moody's opinion, sectarianism undercut evangelistic efforts. Speaking in Chicago in the late 1870s, he addressed the issue, directly claiming a sectarian spirit had subverted the work in Chicago. Moody argued that Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians were condescending towards each other and more interested in converts to their denomination than to Christianity. He described this attitude as a major stone hindering the work. He concluded, "Let us have none of that spirit in this

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<sup>44</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*. He makes this point at several points throughout his book.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in: Thomas E. Corts, "D. L. Moody: Payment on Account," *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition* ed. Timothy George (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 69. Corts goes on to describe Moody as a "walking, talking iconoclast." (70)

<sup>46</sup> Dwight Moody, *New Sermons*, 14.

meeting. Talk not of this sect and that sect ... but solely and exclusively of the great comprehensive cause of Jesus Christ.”<sup>47</sup>

An illustration from one of his sermons reinforced this point. Commenting on II Timothy 1:12, Moody told of a meeting between a dying soldier and a chaplain during the Civil War. The soldier asked the chaplain, to what persuasion he belonged. The chaplain answered “Paul’s persuasion.” The soldier replied by asking if he was Methodist, Presbyterian or Episcopalian. The chaplain replied “no” to all these options then said, “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Moody ended the story by proclaiming, “It is a grand persuasion; and it gave the dying soldier rest in a dying hour.”<sup>48</sup>

What is even more striking was Moody’s extension of the principle of non-sectarianism to Roman Catholicism. On this issue, Moody stood in stark contrast to many of his Protestant brethren. Josiah Strong spoke for many Protestants when he wrote in 1891,

The growing spirit of charity which thinketh no evil, is slow to recognize the fact that most Roman Catholics are Catholics first and citizens afterward. The fact remains, however, and makes it possible to throw the Roman Catholic Church into a single political scale. Those who do not believe that the priesthood has both the power and the disposition to cast a substantially solid Catholic vote simply do not know what some others do know.<sup>49</sup>

Given this anti-Catholic sentiment among evangelicals, the cordial relationship Moody maintained with Roman Catholicism was remarkable.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>48</sup> D. L. Moody, *The Way to God and How to Find it*, Chapter 4.

<sup>49</sup> Josiah Strong. *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, rev. ed. (New York: Baker and Taylor Company, 1891), 96.

Moody formulated this approach to Roman Catholicism early during his time in Chicago, a notably anti-Roman town, as previously discussed. Despite this, Moody reached out to Roman Catholics. One of the more interesting and illustrative events during the early years of the Sunday School was Moody's interaction with Bishop Duggin, the Roman Catholic prelate of the Chicago diocese. After having several meetings disrupted by Catholic boys from the area who were throwing stones through the windows of the meeting room, Moody went to visit the bishop, who invited him to join the Roman church. Moody declined, saying that then he would not be allowed to work or pray with Protestants. The bishop replied that such would not be the case. Moody then asked to pray with him there in the bishop's home. They knelt in the bishop's hall together and prayed for Moody's Sunday School.<sup>50</sup>

A similar story comes from a 1955 B. D. thesis by August Fry, who recounted a story his father told him. Fry's father grew up on Chicago's Near North Side during Moody's ministry in that part of the city. He recalled the Irish boys in the neighborhood referring to Moody as "Father Moody" and how they all enjoyed the times he would stop by to share stories.<sup>51</sup>

Those early episodes would set the tone for Moody's interaction with the Roman Church and with individual Roman Catholics throughout his ministry. During his career he received what was, for those times, notable support from Roman Catholics. Moody made numerous preaching tours of the American East Coast. Cities like Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia and New York contained large numbers of Roman Catholic immigrants and the Roman Church in these areas generally welcomed Moody. *The Tablet*, a Northeastern-based Roman Catholic newspaper, provided evidence of this attitude in a lengthy editorial that was generally favourable towards Moody. It opined,

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<sup>50</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 68ff.

<sup>51</sup> August J. Fry, *D. L. Moody: The Formative Years, 1856-1873* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955), 2.



“The work of Mr. Moody is not sin. It cannot be sin to invite men to love and serve Jesus Christ. It is irregular, unauthorized, but it may bring multitudes to a happier frame of mind, in which the Church may find them better prepared to received her sublime faith.”<sup>52</sup> It also published statements by a number of prominent Catholics in support of Moody.<sup>53</sup>

Moody also travelled to Ireland as part of his first campaign in the United Kingdom. He went straight to Dublin and ran a series of meetings for five weeks. He astonished the Irish by refusing to attack the Roman Catholic Church and in turn received a measure of support from the Roman Catholic newspaper in Dublin. The paper covered the meetings and editorialized,

The deadly danger of the age comes upon us from the direction of Huxley and Darwin and Tyndall, rather than Moody and Sankey. Irish Catholics desire to see Protestants deeply imbued with religious feeling rather than tinged with rationalism and infidelity, and so long as the religious services of our Protestant neighbours are honestly directed to quickening religious thought in their own body without offering aggressive or intentional insult to us, it is our duty to pay the homage of our respect to their conscientious conviction: in a word, to do as we would be done by.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 284.

<sup>53</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 238-40; 289-90. In addition to those cited above, Dorsett gives numerous other examples that illustrate Moody's relationship to the Roman Church. Most notably, he tells of F. B. Meyer recalling how when Moody's mother died, the local Roman Catholic Church asked if they could supply a pallbearer. Timothy George makes a similar point. George, *Mr. Moody*, 6

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 215.

Consequently the mission produced a series of meetings described as, “the most remarkable ever witnessed in Ireland.”<sup>55</sup>

A personal letter Moody received in 1875 from a Roman Catholic monk in Wales demonstrated a poignant illustration of the response by some Catholics. The monk’s commitment to Roman Catholicism is clear in his description of his order, “I and my people are what you would call ‘High-Lows,’ for we are extreme Catholic and ritualists and have in our Houses the perpetual adoration of the holy sacrament.” His admiration for Moody was evident as he wrote, “In these days of tribulation surrounded by rationalism and infidelity without, and secularism within, yours is a work to confound the one and break down the other....” He concluded, “I have prayed and shall pray for a blessing upon you....”<sup>56</sup> Moody believed this brother’s prayer was one of the reasons his campaign was going so well.<sup>57</sup>

Moody’s openness to Romanism continued throughout his life. In his published sermon “Love,” Moody told of an imprisoned Roman Catholic Archbishop who traced out a cross in his cell. Moody concluded, “Ah, that Catholic bishop had been to Calvary. He could realize the breadth and length and depth and height of God’s love, and that Christ gave Himself up freely for us all.”<sup>58</sup>

In Northfield, he employed a Roman Catholic man who struggled with alcoholism. Moody worked with him and always encouraged him to attend the local Catholic Church.<sup>59</sup> At one point, he made a personal donation to help the parish church in Northfield purchase a new organ.<sup>60</sup> His son Paul recounted the event in his biography of Moody in the following manner.

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<sup>55</sup> Pollock, *Moody*, 131.

<sup>56</sup> Letter to Moody, March 17, 1875, *Moodyana Collection*, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>57</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 239.

<sup>58</sup> Dwight Moody, *Glad Tidings*, 331.

<sup>59</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 239.

<sup>60</sup> The actual organ is on display at the Northfield Historical Society in Northfield, Mass.

He gave a substantial donation to the Catholic Church when it was in the process of erection in Northfield and also an organ, and the dear old pinhead people attacked him in print and otherwise. For years afterwards he received letters, particularly from England, that he had been fellowshipping the anti-Christ and they consigned him to the outmost hell. He chuckled over these.<sup>61</sup>

While Moody may have faced chastening from “dear old pinhead” Protestants, the local Catholic parish in Northfield displayed no rancour towards Moody. Indeed, when his mother died, the church asked “...that they might furnish a pallbearer” as a token of respect.<sup>62</sup>

As late as January 1899, the year of his death, he wrote to his son-in-law, A. P. Fitt, about a planned book on the doctrine of the atonement. He wrote that he was eager to get the book out, suggesting it would be “well to see what Luther, Wesley, Spurgeon and others said.” He encouraged Fitt to get C. I. Scofield to help. He then wrote, “... and I would get some strong statement from the Roman Catholic Church—the Episcopal Church—and all the different denominations.”<sup>63</sup>

However, it would be wrong to conclude Moody endorsed Roman Catholicism without criticism. As Gundry pointed out, Moody was not afraid to draw distinctions between himself and the Catholic Church on the issues of confession, priestly

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<sup>61</sup> Paul Moody, *My Father*. John Pollock records a similar events and reactions. He writes: “[Moody’s] willingness to co-operate [with Roman Catholicism] went far beyond the imagination of his friends, who were shocked that he subscribed towards the building of St. Patrick’s Roman Catholic church for Northfield’s Irish colony, and horrified when he accepted an invitation from a friend who had turned Roman to meet Archbishop Corrigan of New York, to whom he said ‘he wanted to see New York shaken for Christ and wouldn’t it be a great thing if all the churches swung into a simultaneous effort ... The Archbishop had the power to do it for the Roman Catholic churches, and the other churches would follow the lead.’” Pollock, *Moody Without Sankey*, 251.

<sup>62</sup> F. B. Meyer, “D. L. Moody: A Prophet of God,” *Northfield Echoes*, Memorial Issue, 7, no. 1 (1900), 29.

<sup>63</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to A. P. Fitt, January 2, 1899, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

absolution, works and the sacraments.<sup>64</sup> For Moody, the important point was a person's relation to Jesus, rather than his or her denominational preference. He fittingly described it in 1898, "Now the way I get a Catholic I say everything good I can about them. There is such a thing as tact, and if you can say a good word for the Catholic Church, say it, and at the same time you want to put the truth in."<sup>65</sup>

F. B Meyer probably summed up Moody's approach aptly in a memorial he delivered shortly after Moody's death. Meyer wrote, "What were Roman Catholics, or Congregationalists, or Baptists to him? The one thing he cared for was the glory of God. These were the things that attracted people."<sup>66</sup>

In Moody's case, his non-sectarianism extended beyond denominationalism. In the previous chapter, we noted the tensions developing among evangelical Protestants over the emergence of liberal theology. While it is true that the Modernist-Fundamentalist debates would not fully emerge until after Moody's death, differences were already obvious nonetheless. Despite the tensions, Moody maintained relationships with both parties.<sup>67</sup> Moody maintained cordial relationships with Washington Gladden, Lyman Abbott, Henry Drummond and William Rainey Harper, while also befriending R. A. Torrey, James M. Gray, A. T. Pierson and A. C. Dixon.<sup>68</sup> These men reflected the spectrum of belief among Protestants. Some consider Washington Gladden, a Congregationalist minister, the father of the Social Gospel

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<sup>64</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 172. Gundry cites numerous sermons in Baltimore and Dublin to support his claim.

<sup>65</sup> "Questions answered by Mr. Moody, at General Conference, Tuesday Afternoon, August 16, 1898" Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>66</sup> Meyer, "D. L. Moody," 29.

<sup>67</sup> For example, W. Robertson Smith the Chair of Old Testament at Aberdeen Free Church College, was brought up on charges by the Free Church in Scotland. He was eventually stripped of his position in 1881. What is interesting is the role supporters of Moody played. Some like Horatius and Andrew Bonar were part of the prosecuting party, while other like Alexander Whyte, George Adam Smith, and Henry Drummond were among his fiercest supporters.

<sup>68</sup> Findlay notes and documents the continued esteem Gladden, Abbott, and Harper held for Moody late in their lives. Findlay, *Moody*, 411.

movement.<sup>69</sup> He embraced liberal Christianity and sought to bring it to bear on the social ills besetting America at the turn of the century. Abbott, a Congregationalist like Gladden, combined liberalism and Darwinism to form an optimistic progressivism. He was fond of exclaiming, "What Jesus was, humanity is becoming."<sup>70</sup> Henry Drummond authored one of the most famous books attempting to reconcile evolution with Christian doctrine, *The Ascent of Man*. William Rainey Harper was the first president of the University of Chicago. As a liberal, he was a devoted advocate of higher criticism. On the other end of the spectrum was R. A. Torrey, a leader in the Fundamentalist movement, and a Congregationalist. Torrey served as President of the Moody Bible Institute and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in addition to conducting worldwide evangelistic tours. A prolific writer, Torrey was instrumental in the publication of *The Fundamentals*, a series of conservative booklets on the faith. James M. Gray, a Reformed Episcopalian, also served as President of Moody Bible Institute. He collaborated with Torrey on *The Fundamentals*. A staunch dispensationalist, Gray also served as an editor of the *Scofield Reference Bible*. A. C. Dixon, a Baptist, was a resolute Fundamentalist who vigorously objected to the methods of higher criticism. He is most noted for the time he served as pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle in London. A Presbyterian, A. T. Pierson was active in the cause of foreign missions. As a contributor to *The Fundamentals*, Pierson was well known for his pietism and premillennialism.

An incident Washington Gladden recorded illustrates how Moody dealt with these factions. A dispute had broken out at Northfield between an evangelist and a higher critic. The cantankerous debate had moved into Moody's study. After listening to both men for a while, Moody called them to prayer. He prayed, "God bless our brother higher Biblical critic and qualify him for his great work. God bless our brother listener

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<sup>69</sup> See for example, Jacob Dorn, *Washington Gladden: Prophet of the Social Gospel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1967). Dorn also described Gladden's high regard for Moody on page 380.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

and strengthen him for the load that has been laid upon him. God bless our brother accuser and give him more love. Amen.” Gladden concluded, “That was the end of the matter.”<sup>71</sup>

Non-sectarianism not only characterized Moody’s revivals, it also distinguished the institutions he developed. As the Illinois Street church was formed, he determined it was to be an independent, evangelical church with “the most aggressive evangelism program in Chicago.”<sup>72</sup> Commenting on the church’s nondenominational status, Moody remarked, “If I thought I had one drop of sectarian blood in my constitution, I would open a vein and let it out.”<sup>73</sup> Even the architecture reflected his views; the sanctuary contained both a baptistery and a baptismal font to provide for both adult and infant baptisms.<sup>74</sup>

His schools would be no different. All four in the United States—two in Northfield, Mount Hermon and Moody Bible Institute—were nonsectarian. His remarkable openness to Roman Catholics was demonstrated especially at the two Massachusetts schools. Roman Catholics attended the schools, and the school newspapers contained stories celebrating the Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola and Bernard of Clairvaux, among others.<sup>75</sup>

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that Moody’s non-sectarianism led him to dismiss the local church. Speaking to the leaders of the YMCA he advised, “Do not, however, put the Association in place of the church; it is only a handmaid and a feeder of the church.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Washington Gladden, “Clear-Headed, Broad-Minded, Great-hearted,” *The Congregationalist and Christian World* (November 12, 1914), 234.

<sup>72</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 123.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Pollock, *Moody*, 60.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>75</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 289.

<sup>76</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 203. Moody referred to the local church as “the best institution found under heaven.” He goes on, “I have always been a member of the church . . . Christ died in order to redeem the church, and everyone who is faithful to him, ought to support it.” David M. Gustafson, *D. L.*

In fact, in the 1879 Cleveland campaign, he began holding more meetings in churches, rather than in large tabernacles. As he explained, "The plan of holding meetings in the tabernacle centralizes the interest and possibly draws out larger crowds, but the churches are the place to do effective work."<sup>77</sup> Moody believed the local church was the end of his work. As he put it, "No man in the world should be so happy as a man of God. It is one continual source of gladness. He can look up and say, "God is my Father, Christ is my Savior, and the Church is my mother."<sup>78</sup>

Moody was a man of conviction, but he was also a man with a generous spirit and a singular focus on evangelism. Consequently, Lyman Abbott's quote probably best sums him up, "Not the least of the many services which Mr. Moody rendered to the age has been this practical demonstration that...a true Christian catholicity is always possible."<sup>79</sup>

### **C. The Bible**

*"He knew only two books, the Bible and Human Nature. Out of these he spoke; and because both are books of life, his words were afire with life..."<sup>80</sup>*

—Henry Drummond and George Adam Smith

*"I have one rule about books. I do not read any book, unless it will help me understand the Book ..."<sup>81</sup>*

—Dwight Moody

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*Moody and Swedes: Shaping Evangelical Identity among Swedish Mission Friends 1867–1899* (Linköping, Sweden: Linköping University, 2008), 310.

<sup>77</sup> *Cleveland Leader*, November 9, 1879.

<sup>78</sup> Clipping, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 33. See also Lyman Abbott, "Snap-Shots of My Contemporaries, Dwight Lyman Moody – Evangelist," *The Outlook* (June 22, no year), 324-27, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL. Several times Abbott lauds Moody's "breadth of spirit" and "Catholicity."

<sup>80</sup> Henry Drummond and George Adam Smith, *Dwight L. Moody*, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL, 1. This is five pages of typed out material collected together in a file. It lists no date or publisher.

<sup>81</sup> Dwight Moody, *Glad Tidings*, 452.

*"An old writer said that some books are to be tasted, some to be swallowed, some to be chewed and digested. The Bible is one that you can never finish with. It is like a bottomless well; you can always find fresh truth gushing forth from its pages... I thank God there is a height in the Book that I have never been able to reach, a depth that I have never been able to fathom."*<sup>82</sup>

—Dwight Moody

At a meeting held at Carnegie Hall in 1937 to celebrate the centenary of the birth of D. L. Moody, Henry Sloane Coffin gave one of three keynote addresses. Coffin had become friends with Moody at Yale and was later be a regular speaker at the Northfield conferences. After Moody's death, he became one of the leading spokespersons for Protestant Liberalism and served as president of Union Theological Seminary. In his address, he recounted a conversation he had while riding with Mr. Moody in his buggy.

"Harry Coffin, do you swallow this higher critic stuff?"

I said: "Mr. Moody the evidence seems to me to indicate that the general outlines of it are correct."

He said: "Do you believe there were two Isaiahs?"

I said: "Well, it appears that the historical background indicates that parts of that book come from different situations."

"Well," he said, "that is what my dear friend, George Adam Smith thinks, but what is the use of talking about two Isaiahs when people do not know what one said?"

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<sup>82</sup> Dwight Moody, *Golden Counsels* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1899), 1.



And then he pinched me on the knee—he had a way of doing that when you were next to him in the buggy—and said: “See here, it doesn’t make much difference who wrote the book anyhow, God could have used a half dozen Isaiahs. The important thing is what is there – do you believe it? Do you live it? Will you teach it?”

With that came another pinch on the knee.

That was Moody (laughter).<sup>83</sup>

Coffin’s story seems to indicate that Moody’s view of scripture was somewhat pragmatic and ambivalent. At first glance, several pieces of evidence support this interpretation. First, there are numerous stories of Moody taking notes during lectures by scholars like George Adam Smith and William Rainey Harper. In addition, *Christian Century* attempted to cast Moody as a moderate in the 1920s.<sup>84</sup> What’s more, his youngest son Paul, in another *The Christian Century* article, claimed his father was more in sympathy with men like Harry Fosdick than the Fundamentalists.<sup>85</sup> Finally, as we have seen, Moody maintained cordial relations with many liberals. However, these facts reveal more about Moody’s affection for individuals and his desire to avoid conflict than they give us insight into his beliefs.

Although some have expressed uncertainty about Moody’s view of Scripture, his views clearly reflect what he saw and heard during his interaction with Mueller, Darby and Spurgeon. Even if they were not articulated in a sophisticated fashion, as we shall see, his views paralleled theirs. Moody’s belief in the Bible was the center of his life and work, so much so that that a colleague and early biographer, J. Wilbur

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<sup>83</sup> *Moody Mass Meeting* (New York City, Carnegie Hall, October 27, 1937), 5- 6, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>84</sup> “Where Would Mr. Moody Stand?” *The Christian Century* (July 12, 1923), 870-72. By the term “moderate” I mean Paul acknowledges Moody was conservative, but he wanted to separate him from the militant, combative form of Fundamentalism that emerged in the early twentieth century.

<sup>85</sup> Paul D. Moody, “Veiled Figure,” 979.

Chapman, claimed it was one of the “three cardinal truths with which his ministry was particularly identified.”<sup>86</sup>

Moody’s first formal statement on the Bible was found in the 1867 *Manual of the Illinois Street Independent Church*. The church grew out of Moody’s Sunday school and was located on Illinois Street between LaSalle Boulevard and Wells Street. The statement of faith consisted of six articles. The second article read as follows. “We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only perfect rule of faith and practice.”<sup>87</sup>

The *Manual* was the work of a committee. Specifically, “Messrs. D. L. Moody, J. H. Thayer, and J. H. Harwood were appointed to draft articles of faith and covenant for the proposed church.”<sup>88</sup> While the actual wording might not be Moody’s, he certainly shared their intent.

Moody was committed to the reliability of the Bible. In Boston he said, “Men may go on scoffing and making light of the Bible, but you will find it out to be true by and by.”<sup>89</sup> Writing to his son William in 1888, Moody expressed his frustration with those who called into question the reliability of the text.

I cannot understand how Munger could differ with me about

Jonah for twice Christ says he was in the belly, so should he be in  
the bowels of the earth. I am sure Christ believed it and so shall

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<sup>86</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 396. Chapman identified the three as; (1) belief in the authority of the Bible, (2) the premillennial second coming of Christ, and (3) the work of the Holy Spirit. The chapter which explains all three of the central themes for Moody is from pages 396-413.

<sup>87</sup> *Manual of the Illinois Street Independent Church* (Chicago: Guilbert & Clissold, 1867), 6, 15. Although this was a nondenominational church, it is clear the Congregationalists played a significant role. Notice for example the similarity between the article above and the corresponding article from the Congregational Manual: “Article 2. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and new Testaments were given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” *Minutes of the General Assemblies of Illinois, at Their 23<sup>d</sup> Annual Meeting, Ottawa, Illinois, May 1868* (Quincy, Illinois: 1886), 51-2. See also Joseph E. Roy, *A Manual of Principles, Doctrines, and Usages of Congregational Churches* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, n. d.), 31. The similarity to Darby’s position outlined in the previous chapter is striking as well.

<sup>88</sup> *Manual of the Illinois Street Independent Church*, 10, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Dwight Moody, “To All People,” 298.

the servant, the master. I hope you will have the courage to stand up against any man who does not preach all the truth. I have little sympathy with any man who would attempt to undermine any man in the Bible.<sup>90</sup>

In a published sermon entitled, “What is Christ to Us?” Moody noted, “People say this Bible was good enough for ancient days; but we have men of culture, of science, of literature now, and its value has decreased to the people of our day. These men want us to give up the Bible ... the Bible of our fathers and mothers is true.” He concluded the section by claiming, “Look at the history of the nations where the Bible has been trampled under foot. Only a few years ago France and England were pretty nearly equal. England threw the Bible open to the world; and France tried to trample it. Now the English language is spoken around the world, and its prosperity has increased. But look at France. It has gone down and down with anarchy and revolution.”<sup>91</sup>

Later, in 1894, commenting to a newspaper in Montreal, Moody said, “I notice if a man goes to cut up the Bible and comes to the one truth and says, ‘I don’t believe this and I don’t believe that’—I notice that when he begins to doubt portions of the Word of God he soon doubts it all.”<sup>92</sup>

When interviewed by the *Boston Traveler* regarding his views on Scripture, Moody’s reply was telling, “I cannot understand what these people mean who come to me and say that they cannot believe in the Old Testament, but can believe in the New. Now, both Testaments come from the Lord, and both are entitled to the same credence... If you can’t rely on this book, what can you rely on?”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to William, October 20, 1888, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>91</sup> Dwight Moody, *The Gospel Awakening*, 429-30.

<sup>92</sup> *Montreal Daily Star*, November 29, 1894. Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 203.

<sup>93</sup> *Boston Traveler*, January 5, 1897. Quoted in Findlay, *Moody*, 409.

Clearly, Moody's understanding of scriptural reliability brought him into conflict with proponents of higher criticism.<sup>94</sup> However, as the Coffin story indicated, Moody often tried to avoid polemics on the subject. His son Paul recounted a discussion with Moody regarding the divergent accounts of the death of Judas found in the Gospels. Moody's response to the problem was "What difference does it make what happened to a rascal like Judas?"<sup>95</sup> While he avoided polemics, it would be wrong to conclude that Moody was unclear about his beliefs concerning the Bible. When asked by a reporter to comment on the contention of a liberal preacher that the story of Jonah was a myth, Moody replied, "I stand by Jonah."<sup>96</sup> Preaching in Boston in 1877 he commented, "That is the kind of men we want nowadays—men who won't take and cut the Bible to pieces, like the king who took out his penknife and said, 'I don't like that. Cut that out.... And so they cut and slashed away at the Bible until they haven't got hardly anything left.'"<sup>97</sup>

Because of his commitment to the Bible's reliability, he chose to live with a degree of ambiguity regarding difficult issues. J. Wilber Chapman recounted a conversation that illustrated Moody's belief.

A man came to me with a difficult passage some time ago and said, "Moody, what would you do with that?" I answered, "I don't do anything with it." "How do you understand it?" "I don't understand it." "How do you explain it?" "I don't explain it." "Well, then, what do you do with it?" "I don't do anything with it." "But you believe it, don't you?" "O, yes, I believe it, but there

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<sup>94</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 212-27. Gundry carefully documents Moody's repudiation of higher critical methods.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Paul Moody, *My Father*, 191.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 496.

<sup>97</sup> Dwight Moody, "To All People," 67, 71, 275.

are lots of things that I believe that I cannot understand and that I cannot make plain. I do not know anything about higher mathematics but I believe in them, with all my heart. I do not understand astronomy, but I certainly believe in astronomy.”<sup>98</sup>

In fact, Moody pointed to difficult passages as a kind of proof for the Bible’s reliability.<sup>99</sup>

Not only was Moody committed to the reliability of the Bible, he also saw it as authoritative. For Moody the Bible rebutted all sceptics. When asked about the authority of the Bible he remarked, “I am not here to defend the Bible; it will take care of itself.”<sup>100</sup> Preaching in Boston, Moody remarked, “... the Bible is a match for all infidels; that is the reason so many Christians are overcome by infidels because they do not know their Bibles well enough.” Indeed, it was the final authority for Moody on all issues. As *The Free Church Monthly Record* put it, “An appeal to Scripture is with them [Moody and Sankey] the end to all controversy.”<sup>101</sup>

Part of Moody’s commitment to the Bible can be explained by what he believed about the Bible’s role in human life. Specifically, Moody was a traditional Protestant; he believed that the Bible was the means God used to transform humanity. Thus, for Moody, the Bible was foundational. Moody composed the following list of how the Bible works in a person’s life in *Notes from My Bible*, in a section called “What the Word of God Does.”

I Peter 1:23. By it we are born again.

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<sup>98</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 398.

<sup>99</sup> “But someone else asks, ‘what am I going to do when I come to a thing that I cannot understand?’ I answer, ‘I thank God that there are heights in it that I have never scaled, and depths in it that I have never sounded, because if I could understand it all, I would know that a man not greater than myself had written it. When it is beyond me in places, I know that God must have written it. It is one of the strongest proofs that the Bible must have come from God that the wise men in all the ages have been digging down into it, and never yet have sounded its depths.’” Chapman, *Life and Work*, 397.

<sup>100</sup> J. W. Hanson, *The Life and Works of the Worlds Greatest Evangelist Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1900), 165.

<sup>101</sup> *The Free Church Monthly Record of February 1874*, 27. This is the Free Church in Scotland.

I Peter 2:2. By it we grow.

John 15:3. By it we are cleansed.

John 17:17. By it we are sanctified.

Psalm 119:105. By it we get light.

Ephesians 6:17. By it we are defended.

John 12:48. By it man is judged.<sup>102</sup>

In the same work, his note on II Timothy 3:15 read, "Scripture knowledge is the candle without which faith cannot see to do its work."<sup>103</sup> At the end of the work, he expanded the "candle" theme in a section entitled "The Candles of Scripture":

1. The candle of the law: Conscience. Proverbs 20:27; Psalm 18:28.
2. The candle of grace: Love. Luke 15:8.
3. The candle of Testimony: Life Matthew 5:15.
4. The candle extinguished: Death. Job 18:6; 21:17.
5. The candle outshone: Glory. Revelation 22:5.<sup>104</sup>

Reflecting on his own life Moody observed, "I wish I had spent a little more time during the first years of my Christian experience in studying the Bible."<sup>105</sup> While he may have lamented not spending a little more time, it is obvious Moody tried to study the Bible almost immediately following his conversion. His early letters home reflect his study. In a March 17, 1857 letter to his brother George, he wrote, "I hope you

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<sup>102</sup> Dwight Moody, *Notes From My Bible: From Genesis to Revelation* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.) 194.

<sup>103</sup> Dwight Moody, *Notes From My Bible*, 176.

<sup>104</sup> Dwight Moody, *Notes From My Bible*, 196.

<sup>105</sup> Dwight Moody, "To All People," 448.

will holde on to the promises in the Bible... and God likes us to cling on as the Samest sais in one place God likes to chastise them whome he loves so let us pray for each other.”<sup>106</sup> In an 1862 letter to his brother Samuel, Moody encouraged him, “...you know the Bible says that if any man will be my disciple let him take up his cross & follow me.”<sup>107</sup>

By all accounts, Moody had a limited education and was hardly a voracious reader as a young man. We have seen how difficult it was for Moody to read the Bible. The fact that he pushed himself to read it, and absorbed enough of it that it became part of his vocabulary, indicated his commitment to the book. By 1861, he had picked up the habit of using a concordance to help with his study.<sup>108</sup> This habit would remain part of his mature study of Scripture.

Additionally, by 1862 he was preaching up to three times a day. In a letter to his brother that same year, he lamented his lack of study: “I do not get 5 minutes a day to study so I have to talk just as it happens.”<sup>109</sup> In his biography of Moody, Daniels describes these early sermons, “[T]hough often founded upon a text of Scripture, [the sermons] were largely made up of personal incidents... appeals to Christians, inciting to greater activity; and earnest calls to sinners, urging them to repent and believe the Gospel.”<sup>110</sup> We have seen how Moody attempted to make up for his lack of study by constantly plying those around him with Bible questions. One acquaintance recalled a dinner in Peoria, Illinois, during the Civil War. He remarked on Moody’s “intense thirst

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<sup>106</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to George, March 17, 1857, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL. While other early letters do not contain direct quotes from the Bible, they do contain allusions to the text. See, for example, the earlier referenced letters: D. L. Moody, letter to mother, September 25, 1856; D. L. Moody, letter to brother, October 19, 1856; D. L. Moody, letter to Mother, September 24, 1860; D. L. Moody, letter to Mother, September 13, 1862. Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

<sup>107</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to Samuel, January 13, 1862, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>108</sup> D. L. Moody, *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study*, 54.

<sup>109</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to brother Samuel, 1862, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>110</sup> Daniels, *D. L. Moody*, 174.

for the knowledge of the Bible, for the entire dinner time was taken by Mr. Moody in quoting verses and in asking the ministers to tell him, 'What does this verse mean?'"<sup>111</sup>

Moody's personal study habits did improve. The 1867 trip to London provided the key for Moody's later personal Bible study. Moody synthesized his teaching from George Mueller with the instruction of others and eventually developed a multi-faceted approach to studying the Bible that involved reading a single book through three separate times; first for the story, second for the thought, and third for the literary style.<sup>112</sup> He also incorporated completely different methods such as studying the Bible topically within a single chapter.<sup>113</sup>

Given his approach to Bible study, it is not surprising that his son wrote after his death, "He knew his Bible as very few have done, and was always wearing out Bibles, covering the margins with references and notes, and allowing them to pass freely among his friends. His Bible school and the Chicago seminary have filled hundreds of young minds with the same enthusiasm."<sup>114</sup> One cannot study the life of Moody and not gain an immediate sense of the central role Scripture played in his life.

The Bible played a prominent role in Moody's later letters. A survey of Moody's personal letters reveals a plethora of Bible references. One commentator goes so far as to claim that, "In every piece of writing the Lord's name appeared; in all his conversations with intimate friends he praised the Lord and the Bible."<sup>115</sup> While probably an exaggeration, it cannot be far from the truth.

Moody's letters to his children also show the role the Bible played in his relationship with them. Writing to his son William from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in January 1885 he enjoined, "I hope you grow up to love the Bible... and I would like to

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<sup>111</sup> McDowell, 26.

<sup>112</sup> D. L. Moody, *How to Study the Bible* (Chicago: F.H. Revell, 1876), 79.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>114</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 163.

<sup>115</sup> Valerie M. Kedlec, "Dwight L. Moody in the British Isles," *Church Management* (1953), 79, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.



say of you as Paul did of Timothy, that from your youth you have known the scriptures for they are able to make you wise unto salvation.”<sup>116</sup> A year earlier in London he wrote to William, “I trust the new year before you will be the best year, and that you will grow in all the graces, Galatians 5:22–23.”<sup>117</sup> Later the same year he wrote to William urging him to memorize Romans 8, “It is one of the grandest chapters in the Bible.”<sup>118</sup> Finally, toward the end of the year he urged both William and Paul, “[L]earn Isaiah 57:15.”<sup>119</sup>

Moody would use the same approach with his grandchildren. Shortly after the birth of his first grandchild, Irene, Moody presented her with a Bible. The inscription read,

The Bible for the last forty years has been the dearest thing on earth to me, and now I give a copy as my first gift to my first grandchild, Irene Moody, with a prayer that it may be her companion through life and guide her to those mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those who love and serve Him on earth.<sup>120</sup>

The Bible was at the forefront of Moody’s revival work. One observer of his work in Scotland credited his reliance on the Bible in his work and preaching as one of the keys to his success among the Scots. He remarked, “The preaching won the Scotsmen’s hearts by its loyalty to the Bible and its expository character.”<sup>121</sup> Another

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<sup>116</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to William, January 21, 1885, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D.L. Moody Papers.

<sup>117</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to William, March 22, 1884, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

<sup>118</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to William, May 10, 1884, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

<sup>119</sup> D. L. Moody, letter to William, October 18, 1884, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

<sup>120</sup> Transcription of D. L. Moody inscription in Bible to granddaughter Irene, Summer 1895, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers.

<sup>121</sup> George Adam Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond* (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1898), 57.

account concluded, "It was said that Moody's preaching abounded with nothing so much as with the Scripture."<sup>122</sup>

Not only was the Bible crucial in his preaching, it was equally vital in personal work. He wrote, "...[I]f we are going to be successful we must have hand to hand work, singling out some one person at a time and presenting to them the truths of the Bible."<sup>123</sup>

The Bible played a critical role in Moody's educational enterprises. John McDowell, commenting on the Northfield schools, made this clear: "[Moody] made the Bible central in all the work of his schools, going so far as to put a Bible in the cornerstone of every major building erected on the campus of the Northfield Schools." McDowell maintained that three principles drove all of Moody's schools. The third principle was that "the schools were to embrace the Bible as their foundation ..."<sup>124</sup> He concluded, "[Moody] declared more than once that were it not for Christ and the Bible the Northfield Schools never would have existed."<sup>125</sup> McDowell's assertion is supported by the first Seminary announcement which stated, "The Bible is intended to form the basis not only of the belief, but of the life, of the institution."<sup>126</sup>

What was true for the Northfield enterprise was doubly true for the Bible Institute in Chicago. Describing his vision for the school Moody said, "Give them [the students] plain English and good Scripture. It is the sword of the Lord and cuts deep." He envisioned a typical day as mornings given to Bible lectures while the afternoon and evenings consisted of preaching and other evangelistic meetings throughout the city.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *The Missionary Record of the United Presbyterian of February 1874*, 76.

<sup>123</sup> Dwight Moody, "To All People," 67, 71. Chapman records a similar account in *The Life and Work of Dwight Lyman Moody* in chapter 19.

<sup>124</sup> McDowell, 12.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>126</sup> "Prospectus, Northfield Young Ladies Seminary, 1879" *Northfield Seminary Calendars, 1879-1889*.

<sup>127</sup> *Record of Christian Work*, V (February 1886) 5.

Moody believed the Bible was crucial in sustaining conversions and sobriety. He was fond of saying, "This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book," and "The Word alone makes us sure."<sup>128</sup> In the late 1870s he noted, "I have noticed a great many that have been brought out commence right off to study their Bible; but those who have been brought out, and do not study their Bible, do not love their Bible, I notice they have turned back."<sup>129</sup> In the same revival he said, "I pity those young converts who do not get in love with their Bibles. If you hear these skeptics and scoffers all the time, before you know it you will begin to believe what they say and be just like them; but if you do believe your Bible, the more they attack it, the more they scoff at it the more you will love it."<sup>130</sup> Shortly after his triumphant return from the United Kingdom in 1875, Moody wrote an open letter to new converts that was printed in *The Christian* magazine. The letter read in part, "Do not above all, forsake your Bibles."<sup>131</sup>

This commitment to Scripture is explained in part by Moody's belief in the moral power of the Bible. He once remarked, "The more refined, as a rule, people are, the fonder they are of flowers, and the better they are, as a rule, the more they love the Bible. The fondness for flowers refines people, and the love of the Bible makes them better."<sup>132</sup>

It was Moody's constant habit to encourage new believers in their Bible study. His instruction to them was simple. It was what he called, "the law of perseverance." By way of explanation, he quoted the Psalmist, "I have stuck unto thy testimonies." Moody explained, "...application to the Word will tend to its growth within and its multiplication out. Some people are like express-trains; they skip along so quickly that

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<sup>128</sup> Dwight Moody, *Notes From My Bible*, unnumbered page at the front. See also page 228.

<sup>129</sup> Dwight Moody, "To All People," 350.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>131</sup> *The Christian*, December 2, 1875, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Dwight Moody, *Heaven*, 9.

they see nothing.”<sup>133</sup> He ended this first piece of advice by encouraging people to, “read the Bible itself—do not spend all your time on commentaries and helps. If a man spent all his time reading up the chemical constituents of bread and milk, he would soon starve.”<sup>134</sup>

He told converts to get three books. First, he recommended a large print Bible. They should not get one “you have to hold right under your nose in order to read the print; and if the church happens to be a little dark, you can not see the print.”<sup>135</sup> He said it should also be a good Bible so that they would take care of it, but not so good that they would be afraid to write in it.<sup>136</sup> Second, he advised getting a *Cruden’s Concordance*. He pointed out, “You can find any portion or any verse in the Bible by just turning to this concordance.”<sup>137</sup> Third, Moody recommended purchasing a topical textbook. He maintained these books would help one study the Word of God with profit. The topical textbook should include *The Bible Text Cyclopedia*, a complete classification of Scripture texts in the form of an alphabetical list of subjects.”<sup>138</sup>

Elsewhere, Moody proposed a fourfold study strategy. First, he suggested, pray earnestly for divine illumination (Psalm 119:18). Second, meditate devoutly on the truths revealed (Psalm 119:97). Then inquire honestly, with a readiness to do the will of God when revealed (Acts 8:31-38). Finally, he said, compare Scripture with Scripture (I Corinthians 2:13).<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> James S. Bell, editor, *The D. L. Moody Collection: The Highlights of His Writings, Sermons, Anecdotes, and Life Story* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 288. Taken from Dwight Moody’s *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1895).

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 288. This is an instance of implied perspicuity, i.e., the belief that the Bible is a plain book, thus anyone can read it and get the gist of its teachings.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 288. Moody goes on to express his distaste for “gilt-edged” Bibles that look as if they have never been used.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>139</sup> Dwight Moody, *Notes From My Bible*, 233.

It is obvious from the advice Moody gave others on Bible study that he was fully committed to the notion of perspicuity.<sup>140</sup> He acquired this belief from the Plymouth Brethren, specifically John Darby and George Mueller. Perhaps nothing illustrated Moody's commitment to perspicuity and a literal hermeneutic more than his practice of Bible reading, the public reading of the Bible organized by topic with a few connecting comments added to making the readings flow. As the noted premillennialist minister from St. Louis, James Brookes, described the practice:

Have your leader select some word, as faith, repentance, love, hope, justification, sanctification, and with the aid of a good Concordance, mark down before the time of the meeting the references to the subject under discussion. These can be read as called for, thus presenting all the Holy Ghost has been pleased to reveal on the topic.<sup>141</sup>

Some credited Moody with devising this practice of Bible reading.<sup>142</sup> However, while it did play a prominent role in his revivals and later conferences, he learned this practice from the Plymouth Brethren, specifically Henry Moorhouse.<sup>143</sup> Regardless of its origins, Moody was an enthusiastic proponent of the practice. This technique of Bible

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<sup>140</sup> Darrel B. Robertson, "The Chicago Revival," 220. Another indication of his commitment to perspicuity is found in his work, *How to Study the Bible*. In it, he declares that truth is best found through an unbiased study of the Bible. By that he means without reference to creeds or doctrines.

<sup>141</sup> James Brooks, *The Truth*, V (1879), 314; Ibid., *The Truth*, XXIII (1897), 80-82.

<sup>142</sup> For example, Princeton professor Francis L. Patton. During a lecture on homiletics, Patton comments on the practice. While acknowledging their profound knowledge of the English Bible, he cautions against thinking a sermon is merely, "with the help of Cruden's Concordance, chasing a word through the Bible, making a comment or two on the passages as you go along." Earlier he says, "I suppose that the Bible-reading is a feature of the school of thought of which Mr. Moody is such a distinguished leader." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 1 (1890), 36-7.

<sup>143</sup> For an extended discussion on this topic, see Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), 136-39.

reading assumed a very radical commitment to the notion of the perspicuity of the scripture and the priesthood of all believers.<sup>144</sup>

At times, Moody seemed to equate belief in the Bible with belief in Christ. Moody once asserted, "You can never separate Jesus the Word made flesh from the written word. He, who proclaimed Himself the way, declared also he was the Truth."<sup>145</sup> In a similar vein, he preached in Boston, "that Boston may be brought back to its Bible and that this city may come to know and love the person of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>146</sup> Goodspeed tells us that Moody's preaching in Philadelphia contained a similar refrain, "Mr. Moody says truly, that the test of a revival is the prominence it gives to Bible study ... From the days of Nehemiah down to the present time, every true revival of pure religion has shown itself in a new interest in God's law and testimonies."<sup>147</sup> Moody also stated this proposition negatively, "An infidel is one who doesn't believe in the inspiration of Scripture."<sup>148</sup>

It is apparent that for Dwight Moody, the Bible was the centre of his life and work. He saw the Bible as inspired, reliable, and authoritative. It was the key for effective Christian work and living. It was to be read literally, studied carefully, believed thoroughly and lived comprehensively.<sup>149</sup> While Moody may have been friends and shared pulpits with those who had a more liberal view of Scripture, he did

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<sup>144</sup> In Moody's case, it helps explain one of his concerns with higher critical methods. To Moody, higher criticism made much of the Bible unattainable to laypeople. He believed higher criticism was "ruining revival work and emptying the churches." Moody believed no one would expend time and energy in practical Christian work unless they were certain of the message. As Moody saw it, higher criticism robbed laypeople of religious certainty. Quoted in Weber, 36.

<sup>145</sup> *The Christian* (December 2, 1875), 7.

<sup>146</sup> D. L. Moody, *To All the People* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1877), 360.

<sup>147</sup> E. J. Goodspeed, *D. L. Moody in Philadelphia* (Hammond, Indiana: Helton Publications, n.d.), 84. This is a reprint of an 1877 publication entitled *The Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain*.

<sup>148</sup> Dwight Moody, *New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers* (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson, 1877), 190.

<sup>149</sup> The following quote is just one example of his approach: "I think that every order that the Lord has given us, and ever commanded us to do, ought to be carried out literally . . . If the Word of God doesn't teach it, my friends, don't you receive it; but let us be ready and willing to bow to Scripture, because we read that all Scripture is given by inspiration; that we are not to be one sided Christians and take up one truth and harp on that all the time; but to take up the whole Word of God." D. L. Moody, *To All the People*, 499-500.

not agree with their understanding of the Scripture. Therefore, any attempt to explain Moody's theology or social vision that does not look at the role the Bible played in Moody's thought or action is inadequate.

#### **D. The "Three Rs"**

*"There are three R's in the Bible: Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost."*<sup>150</sup>

—Dwight Moody

Moody's faith was formed and nurtured in the womb of evangelicalism.<sup>151</sup> Its basic teachings formed the backbone of his doctrine. Therefore, the basic tenets of revivalist evangelicalism supported Moody's doctrine of God's love. The core elements of evangelicalism as Moody articulated them in his preaching were the "Three Rs," namely, "Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, and Regeneration from the Holy Ghost."<sup>152</sup> In fact, W. H. Daniels argued these "Three Rs" not only framed his preaching but, "According to this triad of topics, he lays out all his campaigns."<sup>153</sup>

Moody defined human beings as "ruined by sin," meaning that they were both sinful and sinners, a condition traceable to Adam. As he put it in 1870, "You may say the earth is a vast hospital. Every man and woman coming into it needs a physician. If you search, you will find everyone wounded. By nature we are sinners."<sup>154</sup> A little over a decade later, he restated his position, "Men are all bad by nature; the old Adam stock is bad, and we cannot bring forth good fruit until we are grafted into the one True

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<sup>150</sup> Quoted in Daniels, *Moody*, 256.

<sup>151</sup> Again, I am using Larsen's definition.

<sup>152</sup> In his book, *Love Them In*, Gundry traces these three themes throughout most of Moody's sermons. See also George M. Marsden's book, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 35. In addition, one of Moody's personal Bibles at the archives in Northfield Schools contains the following comment on the inner leaf: "This book teaches three things, Ruin, Redemption, Regeneration."

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Daniels, *Moody*, 256.

<sup>154</sup> D. L. Moody, *New Sermons*, 128.

Vine.”<sup>155</sup> In another of his published sermons, he put it this way, “I don’t care where you put man, everywhere he has tried he is a failure. He was put in Eden on trial; and some men say they wish they had Adam’s chance. If you had you would go down as quickly as he did.”<sup>156</sup> Clearly, for Moody sin is a matter of human nature, not environment.

He believed, because we are sinners by nature, we all sin. As he put it in his sermon on “Repentance,”

Is there a man here who can say honestly, “I have not got a sin that I need ask forgiveness for, I haven’t one thing to repent of”? A man who has broken one commandment of God is as guilty as he who has broken ten. If a man don’t feel this, and come to Him repentant and turn his face from sin toward God there is not a ray of hope. Nowhere can you find one ray from Genesis to Revelation. Don’t go out of this Tabernacle saying, “I have nothing to repent.”<sup>157</sup>

Given the fallen state of humanity, Moody argued for the necessity of redemption by Christ. His concept of redemption was very basic: “[B]eing bought back, we sold ourselves for naught, and Christ redeemed us and bought us back.”<sup>158</sup> Humanity’s only escape is through the work of Christ. As Moody explained it, “You ask me what my hope is; it is, that Christ died for my sins, in my stead, in my place, and therefore I can enter into life eternal...”<sup>159</sup> Elsewhere in the same sermon the point was reiterated: “If you ask me what you must do to share this blessing, I answer, go and deal

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<sup>155</sup> D. L. Moody, *Twelve Select Sermons* (Chicago: Fleming F. Revel, 1881), 21.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>157</sup> D. L. Moody, *Moody’s Sermons, Addresses and Prayers* (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson, 1877), 259.

<sup>158</sup> D. L. Moody, *Twelve Select Sermons*, 120.

<sup>159</sup> D. L. Moody, *Ten Select Sermons* (Chicago, 1881), 26.



personally with Christ about it. Take the sinner's place at the foot of the cross. Strip yourself of all your righteousness and put on Christ's..."<sup>160</sup> Moody argued, "If the Word of God don't teach that, it don't teach anything."<sup>161</sup>

For Moody, the blood of Christ played a vital role in human redemption. In a sermon based on Hebrews 12:22, he stated, "...we are not redeemed by such corruptible things [gold and silver], but by the precious blood of Christ."<sup>162</sup> He amplified this claim in his comments on I Peter 1:9. He wrote, the blood of Christ is precious,

1. Because it redeems us. I Pet. 1:19
2. Because it brings us nigh. Eph. 2:3
3. Because it blots out our sins. Rev. 1:5
4. Because it brings peace. Col. 1:20
5. Because it justifies. Rom 5:9
6. Because it cleanses from all sin. I John 1:7
7. Because it gives boldness in the Day of Judgment.<sup>163</sup>

Because of the central role God's love played in Moody's preaching, there has been some debate about Moody's concept of atonement. James Findlay, in his academic biography of Moody, argued that Moody did not hold to substitution, and claimed that a moral influence model suits Moody far better. In fact, he went so far as to describe Moody as varying from "both the standard expressions of evangelical theory and from the Anselmic, penal theories still characteristic of certain groups of scholastic Calvinists in this country."<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>161</sup> Quoted by Gundry in *Love Them In*, 102.

<sup>162</sup> D. L. Moody, *Twelve Select Sermons*, 120.

<sup>163</sup> Dwight Moody, *Notes From My Bible*, 184.

<sup>164</sup> See Findlay, *Moody*, 228-236. The quote is from page 236.

Findlay traced the moral influence model back through Arminianism, to Socinianism with its origins in the work of Peter Abelard. He then appealed to B. B. Warfield for a definition. The moral influence theory “has always been that in which the stress is laid on the manifestation made in the total mission and work of Christ on the ineffable love of God for sinners, which being perceived, breaks down our opposition to God, melts our hearts and brings us prodigals home to the Father’s arms.”<sup>165</sup> Findlay assumed that a substitutionary view is categorized by a primary emphasis on the tremendous wrath of God, while the moral influence view is far more concerned with the love of God. Noting Harry Moorhouse’s popular tagline, “Love them in,” Findlay went on to quote Moody himself in order to show Moody’s apparent congruence with the moral influence model. Moody preached:

I remember for the first few years after I was converted I had a good deal more love for Christ than for God the Father, whom I looked upon as the stern Judge, while I regarded Christ as the Mediator who had come between me and that stern Judge and appeased His wrath; but when I got a little better acquainted with my Bible these views all fled...I began to see that God was to be loved just as much as His Son was.<sup>166</sup>

It is certainly not surprising that Findlay noted Moody emphasis on God’s love. However, many of Moody’s other sermons offer a strikingly different picture. For instance, Moody preached, “You and I have lost life by the fall, and what we want is to get back that life we lost, and we have it offered to us by the atonement of Christ ... Let

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<sup>165</sup> Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Atonement,” *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 15 vols., ed. Samuel M. Jackson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1951-55) 1:353. Cited in Findlay, *Moody*, 232.

<sup>166</sup> D. L. Moody, *Glad Tidings*, 244-45.

us thank God we have a refuge, a substitute for the sin we are groaning under.”<sup>167</sup>

Another account of Moody’s thoughts on the Atonement comes from the diary of Mrs. Jane MacKinnon. She wrote, “Mr. Moody had said at breakfast: ‘What shall I preach to-day? You know all my sermons.’...I was very thankful when Mr. Wylie replied...’Oh, let us hear “The Blood,” just the sermon to give to people already well grounded in the doctrine of the Atonement.”<sup>168</sup> According to his sermon on “The Blood,” one of his most celebrated, “People say we ought to preach up Christ’s life and moral character....But Christ died for our sins. He didn’t say we were to preach His life to save men. Christ’s death is what gives us liberty.”<sup>169</sup>

Moody proclaimed the power of the blood of Jesus to restore the soul, “so the soul is restored to its full beauty of color when it is washed with the blood of Jesus Christ.”<sup>170</sup> He also believed it covered sins. He told the story of a boy in Ireland who was asked by his teacher if there was “anything God cannot do; and the little fellow said, ‘Yes, He cannot see my sins through the blood of Christ.’ The blood covers them.”<sup>171</sup> Moody reinforced the point in one of his illustrations, “Look at that Roman soldier as he pushed his spear into the very heart of the God-man. What a hellish deed! But what was the next thing that took place? Blood covered the spear! Oh! Thank God, the blood covers sin.”<sup>172</sup>

In fact, for Moody, teaching on the saving role of the blood of Christ was a non-negotiable. Preaching in London in 1875, he made his point clearly and forcefully. “If

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<sup>167</sup> Quoted in Stanley N. Gundry, *Love Them In*, 111.

<sup>168</sup> Jane MacKinnon, *Recollections of 1874*, 47, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>169</sup> W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody*, 426.

<sup>170</sup> Dwight Moody, *Heaven*, 94.

<sup>171</sup> D. L. Moody, *Twelve Select Sermons*, 35.

<sup>172</sup> Dwight Lyman Moody, *Anecdotes and illustrations of D.L. Moody: related by him in his revival work* (Chicago: Rhodes and McClure, 1877), 183.

you are in a church, either Dissenting or Established, and the minister doesn't preach the blood, get out of it as Lot out of Sodom."<sup>173</sup>

What is significant is that Moody repeatedly linked the blood of Jesus with substitution. This was particularly true in his sermon "The Blood." As he put it, "I have learned that the man who makes much of the blood in his preaching, much of the atonement, and holds up Christ as the substitute, God honors his preaching ..."<sup>174</sup> Moody made clear his commitment to substitutionary atonement when he declared, "That is the doctrine of the Bible, the glorious doctrine of substitution. Christ paid the penalty, Christ died in our stead."<sup>175</sup> He also said, "Substitution! If you take that out of the Bible you can take the Bible along with you if you wish to. The same story runs all through the book. The scarlet thread is unbroken from Genesis to Revelation. Christ died for us, that's the end of the law."<sup>176</sup>

Two conclusions can be drawn from Moody's words. First, both the ideas of the blood of Christ and of Christ functioning as a substitute for humanity were central to Moody's concept of salvation. Second, the idea of substitution for Moody included the notion of penalty.

Findlay's claim that Moody held to the moral influence theory was simply an overstatement and illustrates the kind of theological ambiguity one finds at times in Moody. It is fair to note that Moody raised themes that are compatible with the moral influence position. Nevertheless, he also used penal substitution language. Moody was not a careful theologian, for he was an evangelist who simply used the language of the Bible. As such, he defies a clear categorization. The ultimate problem with Findlay's

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<sup>173</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 172.

<sup>174</sup> Dwight Moody, *The Gospel Awakening*, 261-62. He also makes this point in pages 99 and 250.

<sup>175</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 113.

<sup>176</sup> D. L. Moody, *Glad Tidings*, 417.

view may simply be that Moody could hold the wrath and love of God in tension, while Findlay evidently could not.<sup>177</sup>

Moody's final "R" was regeneration by the Holy Ghost. Moody believed while the cross is something done *for* humanity, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is something done *to* humanity. The Holy Spirit causes a necessary change in human nature. Moody considered this synonymous with conversion, the new birth or being born again. He claimed, "We must be born of the Spirit, hearts must be regenerated—born again." He believed that every conversion was a supernatural work done by God.<sup>178</sup>

Moody saw this as a crucial doctrine. As he put it, "This doctrine of the New Birth is therefore the foundation of all our hopes for the world to come. It is really the A B C of the Christian religion ... if a man is unsound on this doctrine he will be unsound on almost every other fundamental doctrine in the Bible."<sup>179</sup>

Moody was also quite clear about what regeneration is not. He asserted that it is not attending church, making a resolution to change one's ways, praying, partaking of the Eucharist or being baptized.<sup>180</sup> For Moody, "THERE MUST BE A NEW CREATION. Regeneration is a new creation; and if it is a new creation it must be the work of God."<sup>181</sup>

Regeneration, as Moody understood it, was an inside-out event. It was not an outside-in moral reformation. He explained it this way, "And I cannot help believing in the regeneration of man, when I see men who have been reclaimed... Old things have passed away, and all things have become new. They are not reformed only, but

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<sup>177</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 111, 120. Gundry argued decisively that Moody held to substitutionary atonement contra Findlay's view. I am indebted to Tom Breimaier's "Moody, Spurgeon, and the Historical Unity of Evangelicalism" (unpublished paper, May 2007), for this structure. Breimaier agrees with Gundry, contra Findlay.

<sup>178</sup> D. L. Moody, *To All People*, 199.

<sup>179</sup> D. L. Moody, *The Way to God and How to Find it* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1884), 23.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 26.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

REGENERATED—new men in Christ Jesus.<sup>182</sup> Conversion from the inside out was Moody's ultimate goal. As we shall see, this was a key piece in his urban strategy.

In turn, these doctrines were run through the pervasive American democratic and Arminian grid of the day, that is, every woman and man was encouraged to choose to accept this message of the "Three Rs."<sup>183</sup> Thus, Moody's consistent call to men and women to respond to the Gospel.

This is not to say that Moody was a committed Arminian. Indeed, we have seen his indebtedness to the giant of Calvinist apologists, Charles Spurgeon. Nevertheless, William McLoughlin argued that Moody extended Finney's new measures into the urban scene in the later nineteenth century, and Dorsett argued that Moody's theology was closer to Wesley's than Calvin's.<sup>184</sup> However, Gundry convincingly showed that this was not the case. Bebbington citing Gundry argued "In fact, Moody actually held certain distinctly Calvinist positions. For example, in his book *Notes from My Bible*, he distinguished between the position of believers, which is eternally secure, and their condition, which might lapse into sin. The implication of this was that Moody upheld the doctrine of perseverance of the saints. Furthermore, he was attacked by Methodists as well as by Calvinists. It seems clear that he had forged an uncomplicated soteriology designed to cater to both parties." Bebbington concluded noting Moody once remarked, "I don't try to reconcile God's sovereignty and man's free agency."<sup>185</sup> Nineteenth-century American culture lent itself to a more Arminian approach to the question of

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>183</sup> Gundry, "Demythologizing Moody" in George, *Mr. Moody*, 17-20. In fact, Gundry argues elsewhere that Moody holds to election, but believed it was to be taught to believers, not unbelievers. Gundry, *Love Them In*, 141. For additional insight on the relationship between Christianity and democracy in America, see Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, Reprint edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>184</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 136, 137, 243.

<sup>185</sup> D. L. Moody, *Notes from my Bible*, 121; Bebbington, "Moody as Transatlantic Evangelical" (unpublished paper, November, 2004) 9, 10; Gundry, 138-143.

human freedom in salvation. Moody's approach reflected that culture rather than a well-developed theological commitment.

### ***E. The Holy Spirit***

Moody's belief about the work of the Holy Spirit played a unique role in his theology. He developed his ideas in a period where there was strong interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. Earlier in the century, Charles Finney and Asa Mahan promoted their ideas on the role of the Holy Spirit post-conversion in their revivalist work.<sup>186</sup> By the time Moody was introduced to the revivalist tradition, the thinking of Finney and Mahan was prevalent. In Moody's case, his own experience in 1871 served as the grounding for his teaching. That experience reflected Spurgeon's teaching and the practical instruction of the two Free Methodist women cited earlier.

We have already noted the role that the Holy Spirit played in Moody's concept of regeneration. In that sense, Moody was certainly not unique. However, what does distinguish him is his concept of the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. Specifically, Moody argued for victory over sin and a baptism in the Holy Spirit empowering the Christian for service.<sup>187</sup>

Moody addressed his concept of victory over sin in two books: *Secret Power: or, the Secret of Success in Christian Life and Christian Work* (1881) and *The Way to God and How to Find it* (1884). As he put it, "Whatever the sin is, make your mind up that you will gain victory over it without further delay."<sup>188</sup> However, this does not mean Moody was an advocate for perfectionism or entire sanctification.<sup>189</sup> Speaking at a Keswick convention in 1892, he made this clear. "I dare not make any professions of

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<sup>186</sup> Asa Mahan, *The Baptism of The Holy Ghost* (London: Elliot Stock, 1876). This book also included a work from Charles Finney entitled *The Enduement of Power*. Moody's first pastor, Edward Kirk, was an early disciple of Finney.

<sup>187</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 38.

<sup>188</sup> Dwight Moody, *Sowing and Reaping* (New York: Revell, 1898), 83.

<sup>189</sup> Moody was not a Pentecostal either. Although he emphasizes being baptized in the Spirit, there is no evidence he either spoke in tongues or encouraged speaking in tongues.

being holy. I have peace in Christ and I trust Him, but I don't know what I might be left to do and I never trembled more in thinking of the power of the devil and my own weakness than now. And for a man to make a profession that he is without sin and then fall is an awful stumbling block." Moody went on to reference the fall of Pearsall Smith and continued, "[H]ere was the crux of the whole doctrine of perfection: What is the standard? 'X' makes his own conscience or consciousness the standard and does things God's law and Man's law condemn as wrong and yet claims to be without sin. Right there it seems to me is the danger of the teaching."<sup>190</sup> Moody was not a perfectionist.<sup>191</sup>

He explained his reasoning in an 1876 sermon, "...[F]or twelve or fifteen years ... I thought when a man was converted God changed his whole nature... I now believe that every child of God has two natures. Because we have two natures; there is a battle always going on between the world of light and darkness."<sup>192</sup> Thus, while Moody believed in victory over specific sins, he denied the removal of the sinful nature.

In addition to victory over sin, Moody preached a baptism in the Holy Spirit as a means of empowerment for Christian service. Moody asserted there are "about three classes of Christians." The first class was what he called "3rd chapter of John" Christians, "who had got to Calvary and there got life. They believed on the Son and were saved, and there they rested satisfied. They did not seek anything higher." The second class was "4th chapter of John" Christians, who had a "well of living water bubbling up." He claimed, "There are a few of these, but they are not a hundredth part of the first class." The third or best class was the "7th chapter of John" Christians.

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<sup>190</sup> Quoted in Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 66, 67.

<sup>191</sup> Preaching in 1877, Moody said, "... my friends, it is impossible to find a perfect Christian. They will not be perfect till they arrive in the kingdom of the Master and they are washed in the blood of the Lamb." Dwight Moody, *New Sermons*, 373.

<sup>192</sup> D. L. Moody, *Glad Tidings*, 363-364. Also, in a sermon from Moody delivered in Liverpool in 1875, he reminded the audience to "remember that they would always have two natures, flesh as well as spirit, to the end of their pilgrimage on earth." Quoted in George, *Mr. Moody*, 85.



These are Christians, “Out of whose belly shall flow rivers of living water.”<sup>193</sup> What differentiated these classes was their relationship with the Holy Ghost. The third class was like a glass filled to the brim with water, “so full that merely touching it makes the water pour out.”<sup>194</sup> Clearly, Moody believed that a higher level of Christian living which involved a relationship with the Holy Spirit was possible and desirable.

In the previous chapter, we discussed the debate surrounding the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life after conversion. Moody made his position on this matter clear in a sermon published in 1877. In this sermon, Moody first asserted a second work by the Holy Spirit post regeneration. He explained, “In some sense, and to some extent, the Holy Spirit dwells with every believer; but there is another gift which may be called the gift of the Holy Spirit for service. This gift, it strikes me is entirely distinct and separate from conversion and assurance.”<sup>195</sup>

Explaining further, Moody maintained, “There is a difference between the indwelling of the Holy Ghost and His filling one with power. Every true child of God, who has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, is a temple or dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. But yet he may not have fullness of power.”<sup>196</sup> In essence, Moody drew a line between the work of the Holy Spirit on and in the believer. As he explained it, “Then the Holy Spirit in us is one thing, and the Holy Spirit on us is another ... A man working without this unction, a man working without this anointing, a man working without the Holy Ghost upon him, is losing his time after all.”<sup>197</sup>

The need for Holy Spirit power was a consistent theme in his preaching. In an 1877 sermon he remarked, “God has a great number of children who have no power,

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<sup>193</sup> Quoted in Chapman, *Life and Work*, 410.

<sup>194</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 410-411.

<sup>195</sup> Quoted in Daniels, *Moody*, 396.

<sup>196</sup> Dwight Moody, “The Gift of Power,” *Short Talks* (Chicago: Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1900), 18.

<sup>197</sup> Dwight Moody, *Secret Power: or the secret of success in Christian Life and Work* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1881), 45. For an analysis see Derek Tidball, “Power – ‘In’ and ‘Upon’: a Moody Sermon”, in George, *Mr. Moody*, 117-126.

and the reason is, they have not the gift of the Holy Ghost for service. God does not seem to work with them, and I believe it is because they have not sought this gift.”<sup>198</sup>

Moody explained his position in various ways, but he always linked it to power from God. For example, “God” he exclaimed, “has got grace enough for every one of us, and if we were only full of the Holy Ghost what power we would have!” And later, “How many times we have preached and taught, and it has been like the wind! And why? Because our hearts were not full, and we did not have that anointing.”<sup>199</sup> In another sermon, he applied the teaching to himself. “I want more of this power. Pray for me that I may be so filled with the Holy Spirit when coming on this platform that men may feel I come with a message from God.”<sup>200</sup> Further, Moody believed that being baptized with the Holy Spirit not only empowered existing Christian service, it created new service, especially evangelism.<sup>201</sup>

Accordingly, Holy Ghost-empowered ministry was a doctrine Moody prized.<sup>202</sup> After Moody’s death, R. A. Torrey, a close associate, wrote a book entitled, *Why God used D. L. Moody*. In it, Torrey recorded two incidents that reflected Moody’s earnest belief in the doctrine. The first involved an incident at Northfield where Moody asked Torrey to meet with some of the speakers at a Northfield Conference who did not believe in baptism in the Holy Spirit. Apparently, Moody and Torrey reasoned with these men deep into the night, without success. After the meeting, Torrey recalled Moody’s response. Almost in agony Moody exclaimed, “Oh why will they split hairs? Why don’t they see this is just the one thing they themselves need? They are good teachers ... but why will they not see that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is just the

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<sup>198</sup> Quoted in Daniels, *Moody*, 396.

<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Chapman, *Life and Work*, 411.

<sup>200</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 280.

<sup>201</sup> When asked about lay evangelism he says, “Nothing can stop a man who is red hot and full of the Spirit of God. I believe that a man or a woman who is filled with the Spirit of God can gain access to the hearts of the people, and can have conversions anywhere and everywhere.” Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 450.

<sup>202</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 403. J. Wilber Chapman called this one of his three cardinal truths.

one touch that they themselves need?"<sup>203</sup> Secondly, Torrey recalled the advice Moody gave to him every time he was invited somewhere to speak. "Now Torrey," Moody enjoined, "be sure and preach on the baptism with the Holy Ghost." On one of these occasions, Torrey asked Moody if he was aware Torrey had other sermons. Moody replied, "Never mind that."<sup>204</sup>

Moody's position is best described as a version of the Keswick movement. He shared their commitment to a second work and the need for Spirit-empowered service. Nevertheless, he was less sanguine about victory over sin. While he agreed with Keswick about the Spirit's ability to give victory over sin, he was not in full agreement with their notion that the struggle against sin could be diminished.<sup>205</sup>

Moody's understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit played a key role in his theology. In Moody's mind, the Holy Spirit connected his doctrines of love, regeneration and empowerment for service. In this way, the Spirit functioned as a backbone for his theology. It is no wonder Moody's teaching on the Spirit was a distinctive of his ministry.

#### **F. Premillennialism**

*"I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a life-boat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.' God will come in judgment and burn up this world; they are in it but not of it, like a ship in the water. This world is getting darker, and ruin is coming nearer and nearer. If you have any friends on this wreck unsaved, you had better lose no time in getting them off."*<sup>206</sup>

—Dwight Moody

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<sup>203</sup> R. A. Torrey, *Why God used D. L. Moody* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1923), 56.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 55. Further evidence of Moody's impact on Torrey is seen in Torrey's writings. Specifically his 1898 work, *"The Baptism with the Holy Spirit"* and the 1910 book entitled, *"The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit as Revealed in the Scriptures and Personal Experience."*

<sup>205</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 78.

<sup>206</sup> D.L. Moody, *New Sermons*, 535.

Drawn to a negative view of human history because of the carnage of the Civil War and the chaos of the city, premillennialism provided Moody with an interpretative schema for these events. Spurgeon and the Plymouth Brethren also propagated this schema. Further, premillennialists were noted for their commitment to the reliability of the Bible and a literal reading of the text, two tenets Moody fully embraced.<sup>207</sup> Accordingly, it is hardly surprising Moody became a committed premillennialist. Along with Moody's belief in the Bible, Chapman called premillennialism one of his three cardinal truths.<sup>208</sup>

His premillennialism was a distinguishing characteristic of his ministry. Gundry claims Moody was "the first noteworthy premillennial preacher of revival and evangelicalism in America."<sup>209</sup> Findlay noted that Moody preached on Christ's return at least once every revival campaign.<sup>210</sup>

Nevertheless, as might be expected, Moody did not sharply define his belief, nor did he assert it in a polemical fashion. His response to the postmillennialist position typically reflected his nonsectarian spirit, simply stating, "We will not have division."<sup>211</sup> He also objected to any attempt to lay out a precise pattern for the second coming of Christ, declaring, "I don't know! I don't think any one knows what is going to happen."<sup>212</sup> At another point he urged, "Don't criticize if our watches don't agree about

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<sup>207</sup> Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow*. See also Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), 103-31. Timothy Weber makes this point and notes how it connects premillennialists to earlier strands of Evangelicalism. For another look at Millennialism in America, see Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*.

<sup>208</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 400-1.

<sup>209</sup> Gundry, *Love them In*, 178.

<sup>210</sup> Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody*, 253.

<sup>211</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love them In*, 190.

<sup>212</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 190.

the time we know he is coming.”<sup>213</sup> Even so, Moody was not afraid to assert his belief in general terms.

As has been noted, Moody came to his evangelical convictions when premillennialism was just becoming popular on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact, he acknowledged, “At one time I thought the world would grow better and better until Christ could stay away no longer.” However, after 1867, he was a strong proponent of premillennialism, and he and his lieutenants would play a prominent role in its spread.<sup>214</sup> The Northfield Bible conferences played a strategic role in the promulgation of premillennialism. In fact, from its inception in 1880 until Moody’s death in 1899, premillennialists dominated the pulpit in Northfield.<sup>215</sup>

Moody often spent time explaining and defending this belief. One of the obstacles he faced was the perceived newness or novelty of the doctrine. In a published sermon from 1877, he responded to this charge, “Now some of you think this is a new and strange doctrine, and that those who preach it are speckled birds; but let me tell you that most of the spiritual men in the pulpits of Great Britain are firm in this faith. Spurgeon preaches it.”<sup>216</sup>

Moody believed the Bible contained clear teaching on the Lord’s return. Speaking on prophetic teachings in the Bible he said, “The Bible does not say, as many seem to think, that prophecy is a dark place which we do well to avoid, but rather that it is like a light shining in a dark place.”<sup>217</sup> He began a sermon entitled, “The Return of

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<sup>213</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>214</sup> These include R. A. Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman, James M. Gray, A. T. Pierson, and James H. Brookes, to name a few. See also Derek J. Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of Today’s Movements* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), 64, 143. Timothy Weber observes, “D. L. Moody, ‘Mr. Evangelical’ to nearly everyone at the end of the century, was an early premillennial convert, and nearly every major evangelist after him adopted his eschatology.” Weber, 32-33.

<sup>215</sup> Ernest Sandeen makes this point. He wrote that the Northfield Conferences gave the premillennialists a “nationally prominent platform from which to teach and an extraordinary opportunity to establish themselves as prominent, reputable Protestant leaders.” Sandeen, 175.

<sup>216</sup> Quoted in W. H. Daniels, *Moody*, 475.

<sup>217</sup> Dwight Moody, *Notes From My Bible*, 185.

the Lord,” by citing II Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;” Moody pointed out this passage said “all scripture” not some scripture. He then questioned those who said prophecy is unintelligible or inscrutable. He concluded matter-of-factly that, “if God didn’t mean to have us study the prophecies, he wouldn’t have put them into the Bible.”<sup>218</sup> Further, he argued that when you study the Bible carefully, it does not align with the postmillennialist claim that the world will get better and better. On the contrary, Moody believed the Bible plainly taught the world will get worse.<sup>219</sup>

Moody’s enthusiasm in preaching premillennialism can partly be explained by his understanding of the role the doctrine played in Christian living. In fact, he believed, “the devil does not want us to see this truth, for nothing would wake up the church so much.” He held that a firm belief in the premillennial return of Christ would cause worldly things like “gas stocks, and water stocks and stocks in banks” to lose their grip on humans hearts. The result would be humans whose “hearts are free” and are “looking for the blessed appearing of their Lord.”<sup>220</sup> Moody believed the doctrine had the power not only to spur on the individual but also the church. As he put it, “The Church is cold and formal; may God wake us up! And I know of no better way to do it than to get the Church to look for the return of our Lord.”<sup>221</sup>

Perhaps even more importantly, Moody believed premillennialism spurred Christian work. Citing himself as an example, Moody claimed, “Some people say, ‘Oh,

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<sup>218</sup> Quoted in W. H. Daniels, *Moody*, 467.

<sup>219</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 402-403. Commenting on postmillennialism in another sermon he said, “Some people say, ‘Christ will come in the other side of the millennium.’ Where do you get it? I can’t find it. The Word of God tells me nowhere to watch and wait for the coming of the millennium, but for the coming of the Lord. I don’t find anyplace where God says the world is growing better and better, and that Christ is to have a spiritual reign of a thousand years. I find that the earth is to grow worse and worse . . .” D.L. Moody, *New Sermons*, 534.

<sup>220</sup> Quoted in W. H. Daniels, *Moody*, 468.

<sup>221</sup> D.L. Moody, *New Sermons*, 534.

you will discourage the young converts if you preach that doctrine.' Well my friends, that hasn't been my experience. I have felt like working three times as hard ever since I came to understand that my Lord was coming back again."<sup>222</sup>

The Bible also motivated his commitment to the reality of the Second Advent. Moody believed the return of Jesus was one of the major themes of the New Testament. He maintained, "...[I]t is taught in the New Testament as clearly as any other doctrine..." He pointed out that churches have firm teachings on baptism yet say little on the return of Jesus. He found that perplexing, since by his count baptism was only mentioned thirteen times in the New Testament, while the return of Jesus was mentioned over fifty times.<sup>223</sup> He explained, "Now, don't take my word for it; look this doctrine up in your Bibles, and if you find it there, bow down to it and receive it as the word of God."<sup>224</sup>

Moody consistently likened the world to a wrecked or sinking ship. According to Moody, the demise of that ship "is coming nearer and nearer." "God," he exclaimed, "will come in judgment and burn up this world, but the children of God don't belong to this world; they are in it, but not of it, like a ship in the water. The world is getting darker and darker; its ruin is getting nearer and nearer." "God," he believed, had "given him [Moody] a lifeboat and said to him, 'Moody save all you can.'"<sup>225</sup> This would appear to be a pessimistic picture, but here there is a productive tension in his doctrine. In fact, in an 1899 sermon he declared, "Don't think I'm a pessimist ... Pentecost isn't

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 534, 535. His lieutenants repeated this theme. For example, J. Wilbur Chapman in reference to premillennialism said, it was "one of the never-failing inspirations in my ministry. It has constantly stirred me on to increased activity in connection with my evangelistic work, and but for this blessed hope, I think that many times I would have grown discouraged and felt like giving everything up." J. Wilbur Chapman, *A Reason for My Hope* (New York: "Our Hope" Publishing Office, 1916), 4.

<sup>223</sup> Quoted in Daniels, *Moody*, 468.

<sup>224</sup> D.L. Moody, *New Sermons*, 535.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 535.

over yet. Why shouldn't we have now at the close of this old century a great shaking up and a mighty wave from heaven?"<sup>226</sup>

In fact, Moody was quite optimistic at times. Perhaps the most striking example of this optimism was the immensely influential Student Volunteer Movement, in whose founding Moody played a pivotal role. This movement was enthusiastically given to the cause of "the evangelization of the world in this generation."<sup>227</sup>

Nevertheless, it is apparent that Moody's premillennialism made him pessimistic about the trajectory of society and the ability of anything non-supernatural to alter that trajectory. As he put it in one of his sermons, "But some one will say, 'Do you then, make the grace of God a failure?' No, grace is not a failure, but man is. The antediluvian world was a failure; the Jewish world was a failure; man has been a failure everywhere, when he had his own way and been left to himself."<sup>228</sup> Despite this, Moody was very optimistic about evangelism. Further, although he strenuously preached the imminent return of Christ, he also made long-term plans.

Several factors explain this tension within Moody's words and actions. First, Moody lacked theological sophistication. He had no interest in proposing a theological system. Instead, he was an evangelist who let the churches handle the teaching of theology. Second, Moody embraced a naive biblicism. He ignored difficult passages in the Bible and issues raised by proponents of higher criticism. Moody was not interested in trying to make all the parts of the Bible fit together perfectly; he was far more interested in living the Bible. Moody was also optimistic about the evangelistic work of the Holy Spirit, not the progress of the human race. This is consistent with his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, a problem remained. Moody believed regenerated

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<sup>226</sup> Quoted in Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 38.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>228</sup> D.L. Moody, *New Sermons*, 535.



people make society better, but it is not clear how Moody reconciled increasing conversions with a society that continued to decay rapidly. Apparently, he either did not see this tension or he simply ignored it.

### ***G. Conclusion***

Dwight Moody was a thoroughgoing evangelical. Revivalism and evangelicalism were the context for his conversion to and formation in faith. Their leading advocates and institutions taught and modelled the tradition to him. He believed in a nonsectarian Christianity that focused on God's love. He believed the Bible was reliable, and a literal reading of the English text shaped his belief and practice. He held to a classic Protestant orthodoxy that emphasized human sinfulness, the atoning work of Christ on the cross and the necessity of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. In the spirit of the times, he came to emphasize an ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit. Although his views were not developed and nuanced like those of Brookes and Darby, he was at the vanguard of the emergence of premillennialism. These beliefs drove Moody's social vision and social action, the subject of the next chapter.

## V. MOODY'S SOCIAL VISION AND SOCIAL WORK

### A. Moody's Social Vision

*"Whitewashing the pump won't make the water pure."*<sup>1</sup>

—Dwight Moody

The previous chapter provided a look at the key elements of Moody's theology. This chapter will show how that theology shaped Moody's social vision. In short, Moody believed personal conversion was the key to solving the urban social problems of the mid to late nineteenth century. He remarked, "It is a wonderful fact that men and women saved by the blood of Jesus rarely remained subjects of charity."<sup>2</sup> In 1877 he said, "The nation is now crying 'reform' ...but there can be no true reform until Christ gets into our politics. Men are all naturally bad, and cannot reform until the Reformer gets into their hearts."<sup>3</sup> Preaching at the 1876 revival in New York City, Moody commented, "I know there is great misery and suffering in this great city; but what is the cause of it? Why, the sufferers have become lost from the Shepherd's care..."<sup>4</sup> The picture becomes clear: Moody believed that social ills are solved by a change within the hearts of individual women and men. As Moody's son William put it, "He insisted that the most efficacious means of reformation was through the individual."<sup>5</sup>

Three essential points must be established at the outset. First, because Moody believed that individual conversion was the most efficacious means to bring about social change, it does not automatically follow that he objected to programmatic

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Chartier, *The Social Views of D.L. Moody*, 31.

<sup>2</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 171.

<sup>3</sup> Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 185-86.

<sup>4</sup> New York Times, February 19, 1876, 8.

<sup>5</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 170.

responses to social ills; he simply believed programmes alone were ineffective. Second, Moody's prioritization of evangelism over social action reflected the priorities of earlier evangelicals, including the great evangelist of the mid-nineteenth century, Charles Finney, and the renowned British preacher Charles Spurgeon. Third, Moody's prioritization of evangelism not only reflected his personal theology and his tradition, it also reflected his vocation.

There is no doubt Moody believed that conversion was the only solution for urban social ills. For example, Moody firmly believed conversion would solve poverty. He contended that sin was the cause of much poverty; therefore, conversion to faith in Christ would free men and women from the various kinds of sin that held them in poverty. Moody believed two sins in particular, intemperance and laziness, were largely responsible for poverty.

Moody particularly focused on alcohol. Preaching in Boston in 1877, he remarked,

It strikes me this curse of intemperance is worse even than our civil war. That cut off a great many men—ten, twenty, thirty, perhaps forty years earlier than their time; but think of the men that are being ruined body and soul by this terrible curse; and my only hope is that the nation will get their eyes open to the fact that it is a curse, and that there will be a cry going up to God. I noticed a few days ago in the papers that in Great Britain alone \$600,000,000 are spent annually on strong drink, or \$18 for each man, woman and child in Great Britain, and yet they are crying out there about hard times, and we are crying out about hard

times in this country. I think if it were not for this cursed liquor traffic, we would not have any hard times.<sup>6</sup>

Conversion brought freedom from addiction to drink. "God," he exclaimed, "is going to destroy the works of the devil, and this appetite for strong drink is one of the devil's works. Taking away a man's appetite for strong drink is a supernatural work, and that is what God does."<sup>7</sup>

A second sin was laziness. Moody believed conversion would make people into energetic, hard workers. To Moody, this meant that to be a Christian is to be a worker.<sup>8</sup> In 1868 he remarked, "I never knew a lazy man to become a Christian... It is the devil whose workers are idlers."<sup>9</sup> In Boston in 1877, Moody made the point explicitly.

I never knew yet a lazy man to be converted. If he was, he soon gave up his laziness. I tell you that laziness does not belong to Christ's Kingdom. I don't believe a man would have a lazy hair in his head if he was converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. If a man has been born of the Spirit of Christ, he isn't lazy, he wants to find something to do, and any manual labor is not degrading.

Moody went on to point out that since Jesus worked as a carpenter, manual labour was not beneath him. The point was clear: if Jesus not was not above manual labour, no one else should be either.<sup>10</sup> In explaining the work at the YMCA, he remarked, "Let's keep harping on that word, WORK, until everyone who comes in here will feel perfectly

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<sup>6</sup> D. L. Moody, *To All the People*, 136.

<sup>7</sup> D. L. Moody, *To All the People*, 198. Elsewhere he said: "I would like to have men explain the destruction of drunkards' appetite for liquor by natural causes. No. It is a miracle of grace, a miracle wrought by the divine Spirit, through faith in a divine Savior." Quoted in Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 293.

<sup>8</sup> Fry, *D. L. Moody*, 42.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Findlay, *Moody: American Evangelist*, 274, 275.

<sup>10</sup> D. L. Moody, *To All the People*, 499, 500, 450, 451.

wretched unless he is doing something for Christ.”<sup>11</sup> Again, in 1868 he proclaimed, “Every Christian has work to do. It lasts as long as life lasts. When God wants us to rest, He will call us home to heaven.”<sup>12</sup> In 1869, while discussing church membership he said, “When a man wishes to come into our Church, we ask him, what are you going to DO?”<sup>13</sup>

This emphasis on work is sometimes overlooked in studies of Moody. As early as the 1860s, Moody connected conversion and Christianity with work. One of the few works concentrating on Moody’s early years made this point. The author August J. Fry attempted to summarize Moody’s theology during these years by condensing it to six points. He then added a seventh—work. He wrote, “... no idea receives as much attention as this idea—work. It might be said, in spite of the dangerous gauntlet of psychologizing history, that Moody was compulsive about it.”<sup>14</sup> Fry was correct. All of Moody’s schools included a manual labour requirement for all students. In fact, Moody literally worked himself to death. He insisted on conducting a campaign in Kansas City, despite suffering chest pains for two weeks before it began. He told a confidant that he did not tell anyone in his family because they would have prevented him from preaching. On Tuesday of the first week, he confided in his colleague regarding the pain in his chest, but he still refused to see a doctor for two hours. After consulting with the doctor, he again refused to stop speaking, although he was forced to travel the two blocks from his hotel to the meeting hall by carriage. He preached again on that Friday night but was so exhausted he was forced to leave on a train that very night. He did make it back to Northfield, but was dead within two months.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Noon Prayer Meeting”, *Advance*, I, no. 45 (July 9, 1869), 6.

<sup>12</sup> “Noon Prayer Meeting”, *Advance*, I, no. 24 (Feb. 13, 1868), 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Fry, *D. L. Moody*, 42.

<sup>15</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 379, 380.

Beyond mitigating the vices of alcohol and laziness, Moody asserted that conversion fills a human with the love of God, and this love combined with the urge to work produces charity towards others. Moody made this connection clearly in his sermon *To The Work! To The Work!* “Christ has taught us very clearly that any man or woman who is in need of our love and help—whether temporal or spiritual—is our neighbor. If we can render them any service we are to do it in the name of our master.”<sup>16</sup>

Moody’s disdain for laziness, fervour for work, and regard for the Bible influenced his approach to charity. In an 1880 address to converted men, Moody cautioned against charity to men who will not work. He recounted a story of a man in Chicago who was married with five children. On a cold November morning, the man showed up at Moody’s home. The man had no work and the family had been evicted from their residence. When Moody asked the man what the problem was, the man admitted he was lazy. Moody told the man, “I pity your wife and children, but I am not going to take care of a lazy man all winter.” In the evening, the man returned and asked for shelter for his wife and children. Moody recalled, “He knew I wouldn’t let those children stay out all night; he knew he had me.” When Moody asked what the man had been doing all day, the man “used a great many big words, and said he had been studying the philosophy of pauperism.” Moody concluded: “It is not charity to help them. If a man will not work, let him starve. They never die. I never heard of them really starving to death. I never knew them to get out till they worked their way out.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> D. L. Moody, *To The Work! To The Work!*, 109-10. Elsewhere Moody connects love and work. He argues love, “should be the spring of man’s service to God. Men should work for God for love, not for duty.” *New York Times*, November 8, 1875.

<sup>17</sup> Dwight Moody, *The New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers*, (New York: J. W. Goodspeed Publishers, 1880), 604, 605.

As support for his view, Moody cited the Bible.<sup>18</sup> He also provided for the wife and children.

At first glance, Moody's behaviour towards the family seemed inconsistent with his rhetoric. Having said men who do not work should be left to starve, he then cared for the man's family. However, his behaviour was consistent with his earlier work at the YMCA and the Sunday School. We have seen how he cared for the children and wives of alcoholic men. Moody's reasoning on this was clear and grounded in what he believed the Bible taught. He argued that a man's first work was to take care of his family. In fact, he said that no one whose family is in want should give away money for charitable purposes. He then cited I Timothy 5:8, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Moody concluded, "There is what Paul said to you on that subject. He is worse than an infidel."<sup>19</sup> Moody believed the Bible held the husband responsible for his family; he must work. Therefore, charity should not be directed toward a lazy husband; however, his spouse and children should be afforded full Christian charity.

Moody's concern that charity ought not foster laziness extended to his educational enterprises as well. Moody started a number of schools designed to provide educational opportunities for poor children. However, Moody demanded work on the part of his students. When asked why he did not provide free education for poor girls he responded, "If a student can't do her share she isn't worth educating. I am ready to meet any ambitious student halfway... It's better to help a person help himself. I find you can do real injury by doing too much for the individual."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> He cited Psalms 15 and Ecclesiastes 10:18. Dwight Moody, *The New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers*, 604, 605.

<sup>19</sup> D. L. Moody, *To All the People*, 487.

<sup>20</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1930), 308, 309.

Moody's commitment to conversion as the catalyst for personal change explains why he was dubious about social programmes that were not linked to conversion. In 1877 Moody made it clear he had no confidence in voluntary societies or the government to provide an ultimate solution to these problems.

We have tried a great many methods; we have our temperance societies and bands of hope, our lodges and our reform club, and we have had the pledge, and I don't know but I am getting about discouraged with these things. I am coming to the conclusion that the only hope is that the Son of God is to come and destroy man's appetite for liquor. You cannot legislate men to be good. We have appealed to our government and we have failed, and now it is time to appeal to God ... When he comes to their hearts he will give them victory over their appetites.<sup>21</sup>

Speaking on the same subject in 1880, Moody told the following story:

A man there [Philadelphia] had a house built when he was out of town, and the contractor built it with a brown-stone front, but made the sides an imitation, just on the surface. This stood for a while; but when the winter came, it began to crack, and in the spring he had to have it repaired. And every year he had to have it fixed over until he put in a wall like the front. And that was like a sinner trying to make himself better, when what he needed was to be made over again, a new creature. How many who heard him had taken their oaths that they wouldn't drink again, had taken pledges, had written their name with their own blood, had

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<sup>21</sup> D. L. Moody, *To All the People*, 137.



promised their wives, and mothers, and friends, they would stop the use of the intoxicating cup, and yet couldn't keep them. It was like painting the pump, expecting to get pure water.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, when addressing social problems, Moody believed that any reformation effort must be subservient to evangelism. For example, in 1874 Moody was queried about the problem of drunkenness. He remarked, "It would take a day to answer that," but went on to articulate two sides to the question. On the one hand, Moody stated that he believed every Christian church ought to be a temperance society. In addition, he noted in passing that, "... some of the ministers and elders in Scotland ... drink too much wine." On the other hand, he pointed out that too many temperance people prioritize temperance above all else. In doing so, they became like a one-string violin, annoying and ultimately ineffective. Moody concluded, "And so with temperance; only, when you get the chance of a word, slip it in, and give strong drink a rap."<sup>23</sup>

Moody's attitude toward prisoners serves as a useful example of this priority on evangelism as a means for reform. He said,

We must not suppose that all prisoners are hardened criminals. Many a young man has committed a crime in a moment of anger, or under the influence of liquor. The records show that nearly half the prisoners are under twenty five years of age. At this time of life a young man is not supposed to have become settled in his character. If he can be reached by the gospel message before he

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<sup>22</sup> Moody, *The New Sermons of Dwight Lyman Moody*, (New York: 1880), 811. At a revival in Boston in 1877, Moody was asked, "Do you think it best that children sign a covenant that they will not lie, swear, drink etc?" He replied, "Well I did, but I got over it. I don't think much of covenants. I would not say anything against signing the pledge, but I think the only hope is in Christ." Moody, *To All the People*, 180.

<sup>23</sup> "Mr. Moody's Answers to Practical Questions," *The Christian: A Weekly Record of Christian Life, Christian Testimony, and Christian Work*, (London: Morgan and Scott, 7 May 1874) 5: 6-7, 292-293. See also William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 449, 450.

sinks lower and lower, there is every hope for his salvation for this life.<sup>24</sup>

Moody's position reflected earlier American evangelicalism, particularly as Charles Finney expressed it. Like Moody, Finney always made personal conversion the priority of his work. While speaking aggressively and repeatedly against slavery and alcohol, neither took priority over evangelism. Making the same argument Moody would make a half a century later, Finney maintained that social change was ultimately the product of personal conversion. This is a point that Charles Hambricke-Stowe made in his biography of Finney. In reference to Finney's approach to abolition he wrote, "The primary work must be to save sinners, for once saved, believers would reject slavery and every form of sin. Finney advocated making abolition an appendage, just as he made temperance an appendage of revival work in Rochester."<sup>25</sup>

We have seen how the Chicago fire served to focus Moody, so that after 1871, evangelism became his focus. As an evangelist, it followed that Moody would concentrate on conversion. Commenting on Moody's ministry, Charles Spurgeon said:

I thank God that our dear brethren [Moody and Sankey] do not commit themselves to any particular line of thought other than the Gospel, and take no concern in various matters which are in dispute with different sections of Christians. I hold that every man should teach the entire truth as he believes it, and if he be a settled pastor he must not keep back any part of it; but the

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 433.

<sup>25</sup> Hambricke-Stowe, 174. Elsewhere Finney is described as "... forever chary of any diversion, no matter how worthy in itself, from the work of saving souls." Ibid., 111. In fact, because of his insistence that evangelism be the priority, abolitionists like the Tappans ultimately shunned Finney. This foreshadowed Moody's relationship with the temperance movement in general and Frances Willard in particular. See also Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600-1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 164.

evangelists are to show forth only the great cardinal truths of the Gospel, and this our friends do.<sup>26</sup>

However, the primary reason for Moody's commitment to conversion as the only sure means of social change was his anthropology. Moody's anthropology was a function of his evangelical theology, specifically, Moody's belief that all humans are ruined by sin. As we saw in the last chapter in the section on the "Three Rs," sin for Moody was personal and a function of each person's nature—a corrupt nature inherited from Adam.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the nature of an individual, not his or her environment, determined his proclivity to sin. As such, Moody simply could not see how any attempt to change the urban environment could ultimately solve social problems, which he believed were rooted in sin.

As a committed evangelical, Moody believed only Christ could redeem humans from sin. He believed that the sole remedy for human estrangement from God was the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. The cross did more than merely demonstrate God's love; it cleared the object of sin out of the way, and allowed humans to experience God's love.

Moody believed God's love was transformative. Thus, truly redeemed and regenerated men and women would work hard and love others. Their love would be supernaturally produced by the Holy Spirit and cause them to love those in need, including their enemies. As Moody put it, "The regenerate man loves his enemies and tries to repair all wrong he has done... If this sign is not apparent his conversion has never got from his head to his heart."<sup>28</sup> Moody held that, because of sin, humans needed to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. He believed that humans are in such a condition

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of their Lives and Services* (New York: E. J. Hale and Sons, 1876), 227.

<sup>27</sup> D. L. Moody, *New Sermons*, 128.

<sup>28</sup> D. L. Moody, *Great Joy*, 520.

that only a supernatural act of God can change them. For Moody, Christianity was an inside-out religion, one that recreated people internally before recreating the external world in which they lived. He therefore believed it was useless to attempt outside-in societal transformations.

In a sermon published in 1884, Moody graphically illustrated this belief. He asked his audience to imagine the home of a drunkard in any city in America. He described the home as a kind of hell on earth. The place was wretched, the wife and children poorly clothed and fed. The man often came home drunk and beat the family. However, one day the man arrived home and announced that he had been converted at a gospel meeting. Moody continued, "Go down to that house again in a few weeks and what a change!" Moody painted a picture of the wife and the husband sitting in their home together with their children singing hymns. He concluded, "Is not that a picture of Regeneration? I can take you to many such homes, made happy by the regenerating power of the religion of Christ. What men want is the power to overcome temptation, the power to lead a right life."<sup>29</sup>

Because of his belief in the power of personal conversion to moderate social evil, Moody sometimes offered advice to the working class that demonstrated a lack of understanding about the complexity of the labour problems. He advised, "Work faithfully for three dollars a week, it won't be long before you have six and then you will get ten dollars and then twelve ... get these employers always under an obligation to you."<sup>30</sup> He concluded, "You must be so helpful to your employers they cannot get along without you ... and your employer will increase your wages."<sup>31</sup> While addressing a group of converted alcoholics, he urged, "Get something to do. If you cannot earn

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<sup>29</sup> D. L. Moody, *The Way to God and How to Find It*, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, 255.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

more than a dollar a week, earn that. That is better than nothing and you can pray to God for more.”<sup>32</sup> While working in Boston he encouraged reformed alcoholics to leave the city and go out into the country, arguing, “It is not degrading to go out and hoe and shovel in the field, it is noble I think.”<sup>33</sup> In fact, Moody argued, “I don’t see how a man can follow Christ and not be successful.”<sup>34</sup> Moody saw this pattern in his own life and he often commented, “The whole of my early life was one long struggle with poverty... since I began to seek first the kingdom of God, I have wanted for nothing.”<sup>35</sup>

Moody believed that a combination of charity and self-initiative was the answer to unemployment and disability. He benefited as a boy from charity, and he engaged in and supported numerous charitable activities. He believed Christians were required by the Bible to be charitable towards others, the only exception being the lazy. Moreover, as we shall see shortly, he was willing to criticize businesses and the wealthy for their lack of charity. Both charity and self-initiative, in Moody’s opinion, were grounded in conversion.

This perspective helps to explain the advice he gave to his co-workers. He urged them not to have “anything to say about capital and labor. You don’t know anything about it.”<sup>36</sup> This attitude was driven by Moody’s belief that experts should manage politics and operate the economic system. It was the job of the evangelist to preach the gospel and save souls.<sup>37</sup> He gave similar advice about using the pulpit to address sociological topics, saying, ““I say when we have got all the people to repent of their sins and live as God wants them to live, it’ll be time to talk about sociological

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 256. Both this quote and the previous reinforce the connection Moody made between conversion and work.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>35</sup> Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 431.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Findlay, *Moody: American Evangelist*, 277.

<sup>37</sup> Chartier, *The Social Views of D. L. Moody*, 28

questions.”<sup>38</sup> Despite this, Moody occasionally did raise social issues. In London in 1884, he was asked how Americans might contribute to the understanding and general uplift of the population in Britain. He replied that the greatest need in London was for houses, noting, “at present your poor people shift aimlessly from place to place.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, when Moody did talk about governmental reform, he usually cited the need for conversion. He opined, “You can’t reform the government without men who have been themselves reformed, and that reformation must be regeneration through the power of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>40</sup>

However, working conditions in American urban centres were appalling, and if anything, were getting worse during Moody’s lifetime. Moody was keenly aware of the unrest among workers. In fact, as early as 1869 he engaged in a series of conversations with Samuel Fielden, a leading figure in the labour movement.<sup>41</sup> As Fielden recalled it, Moody initiated an “animated” conversation that lasted over an hour and a half. Despite Fielden’s impassioned arguments, Moody remained steadfast in his commitment to conversion as the ultimate solution. Fielden concluded, “We parted at the door with the best feeling toward each other. I am only sorry to say that my opponent has persisted in following the wrong path to this day. I am truly sorry for him. I only wish that we both turn to the right before it is everlastingly too late.”<sup>42</sup>

Labour leaders like Fielden found particularly fertile ground in Chicago. Within the immigrant class were groups of men well-versed in Marxism and anarchism. In the late nineteenth century radical labour movements began to emerge, so that by the 1880s

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<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 151.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Findlay, 361.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love them In*, 151.

<sup>41</sup> Samuel Fielden, *The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs*, ed. Philip Foner [1887] (New York, 1969), 149-150. As the title implies, Fielden was involved in the Haymarket Riot.

<sup>42</sup> Samuel Fielden, 149-150.

Chicago had become the centre for both the socialist and anarchist movements in America. Other, more moderate forms of labour organizations flourished as well.<sup>43</sup>

Moody's comments on labour issues during these years were particularly telling. In 1883 in Chicago, he compared the conditions among the working class in Chicago with those in England. He described the workers in England as "hard-hearted and hard-headed men who gather in their shops on Sunday, or someplace else, and talk communism or infidelity." He concluded, "We are drifting the same way in this country."<sup>44</sup>

In Chicago, the labour issue came to a head in the Haymarket riot of 1886. Workers gathered at the McCormick reaper plant on the evening of May 4 to protest about working conditions. During the speeches, someone threw a homemade bomb into the crowd of police officers who were monitoring the gathering. When order was restored, eight police officers lay dead and sixty others wounded. The exact number of those killed or wounded among the crowd was never determined. Eight leading figures in the city's anarchist movement were arrested and eventually tried for murder. The business community carefully orchestrated the trial. The jury quickly returned a guilty verdict, and the judge sentenced seven of the eight men to death by hanging. The verdicts were met with outrage throughout the country and the rest of the civilized world. International figures like George Bernard Shaw and Leo Tolstoy condemned both the trial and the verdict. Both pleaded for leniency for the convicted. Despite this, the Chicago city leaders remained resolute. Marshall Field, in particular, resisted any call for clemency. Although two death sentences were ultimately commuted, four other

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<sup>43</sup> Miller, *City of the Century*, 233. For a more detailed discussion of the role of labour in Chicago, see Richard Schneirov, *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864-1897* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 327.

defendants were hanged on November 11, 1887. The remaining prisoner committed suicide.<sup>45</sup>

Moody seemed hardly surprised by the event. On the eve of the Haymarket riot he had warned,

Either these people are to be evangelized or the leaven of communism and infidelity will assume such enormous proportions that it will break out in a reign of terror such as this country has never known. It don't take a prophet or a son of a prophet to see these things. You can hear the muttering of the coming convulsion even now, if you open your ears and eyes.<sup>46</sup>

The quote illustrates once again Moody's solution to a social problem—mass conversion. He acted accordingly and redoubled his efforts to bring them the gospel.<sup>47</sup>

A letter to A. P. Fitt from Charles Goss dated November 16, 1910, gives more insight into Moody's thoughts. In the letter, Goss recounts to Fitt an episode where he was sitting with Moody and Francis Murphy.<sup>48</sup> He wrote,

Mr. Moody sat on one side of me, on a lounge, and Francis Murphy on the other: (both weighing, singly, twice as much as I did) and tried to rid me of certain socialistic views. Put together

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<sup>45</sup> Miller, *City of the Century*, 468 – 482. See also Chicago Historical Society and the Trustees of Northwestern University, "Dramas of the Haymarket," [http://www.chicagohistory.org/dramas/act4/otherVenues/otherVenues\\_f.htm](http://www.chicagohistory.org/dramas/act4/otherVenues/otherVenues_f.htm) (accessed September 15, 2009).

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Findlay, "Gapmen," 324. The quote raises the question of the effect of the Civil War on Moody. Given the link between Socialism and revolution, one wonders how the spectre of another bloodbath like the Civil War factored into Moody's anxiety over labour unrest.

<sup>47</sup> Specifically, this event led to the development of the Moody Bible Institute. This is discussed in the next section.

<sup>48</sup> Francis Murphy (1836–1907) was an American temperance evangelist, born in County Wexford, Ireland. He served in the Federal army during the Civil War. Beginning in 1870 at Portsmouth, N. H., he started temperance reform clubs throughout that state and was their first president. His headquarters were in Pittsburgh, Pa., and after his first address there in 1876, 65,000 people signed the pledge he wrote: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, I hereby pledge my sacred honor that, God helping me, I will abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and that I will encourage others to abstain." *New York Times*, July 1, 1907, 7.



with other statements, one can safely surmise Moody is no friend of the Labor movement.<sup>49</sup>

However, towards the end of his career, Moody began to see things somewhat differently. Accordingly, in the late 1880s into the 1890s, he began to speak out against riches and big business.<sup>50</sup> In 1888, he commented, "... it is more profitable to have a clear conscience with God, than to have wealth gathered by defrauding the poor, and grinding the unfortunate."<sup>51</sup> He lashed out against greed and covetousness that "fastened on the hand of Chicago, along with many another Western city."<sup>52</sup> A similar refrain was heard in 1890, "We have too much wealth and too much poverty. Why don't some of the people who have made their fortunes stop and go out into the highways and byways and help the poor? That's my idea of socialism, and it's founded on the ideas of Christ."<sup>53</sup> He attacked employers in 1894 charging, "We treat our servants just about as we treat our sewing machines, if they do their work well, all right; but if they don't, we kick them out."<sup>54</sup> In the same year he called A. T. Stewart, a prominent New York department store owner, "supremely selfish," stating, "one of his clerks got sick and couldn't come to the store for two or three or ten weeks; his wages were cut right off." Moody continued saying Stewart thought, 'He wasn't responsible for aiding the clerk.'<sup>55</sup> In 1897, he directed another verbal broadside towards employers. Moody asked rhetorically, "Are you guilty of sweating your employees? Have you deprived the hireling of his wages? Have you paid starvation wages?"<sup>56</sup> Again, in 1899, Moody

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<sup>49</sup> "Letters to A. P. Fitt," *Moodyana Collection*, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>50</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Chartier, *The Social Views of D. L. Moody*, 17-34.

<sup>51</sup> D. L. Moody, *Bible Characters* (Chicago: Revell, 1888), 105.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love them In*, 151.

<sup>53</sup> *New York Times*, March 12, 1890, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Chartier, *The Social Views of D. L. Moody*, 18.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 19.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Gundry, *Love Them In*, 151.

spoke out, and it is interesting to note that he addressed the structural problem of big corporations: "What can a poor young man do nowadays, unless he goes to work for someone else who is wealthy? ... Trusts, corporations, are bad for young men."<sup>57</sup>

Moody believed employers ought to treat their workers fairly; nonetheless, he never condoned labour unrest. Notwithstanding his misgivings about the way workers were treated, Moody was never moved beyond his belief in personal conversion and charity as the ultimate solution for societal problems.

Moody's social vision was a function of his theology. Because of his belief in the "Three Rs," he doggedly maintained individual sin was the cause of the problem and regeneration was the only solution. He appealed to the Bible when dealing with perceived laziness. Moreover, because of his belief in the imminent return of Christ and the inevitable destruction of society, he was loath to move away from constantly proclaiming the gospel.

However, for Moody proclaiming the gospel was never merely a matter of speech alone. Christianity, as Moody conceived it, was about living and doing. Therefore, the following excerpt of one of his published sermons on the topic of "The Good Samaritan" probably best summarized Moody's social vision.

If you want to get into sympathy, you need to put yourself into a man's place. Chicago needs Christians whose hearts are full of compassion and sympathy. If we haven't got it, pray that we may have it, so that we may be able to reach those men and women that need kindly words and kindly actions far more than sermons. The mistake is that we have been preaching too much and sympathizing too little. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of deeds not words.

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Findlay, *Moody: American Evangelist*, 264-65.

May the Spirit of the Lord come upon us this night. May we remember that Christ was moved in compassion for us, and may we, if we find some poor man going down among thieves, or lying wounded and bleeding, look upon him with sympathy, and get below him and raise him up.<sup>58</sup>

The crux of Moody's social vision was that Christians must love and care for the poor, because Jesus loved us and the Bible demands it. He maintained that part of evangelism consisted of doing good deeds, and this ability to do good was rooted in conversion and the subsequent empowering of the Holy Spirit.

### B. Moody's Social Work

*"If some of you fashionable people would get along with fewer dresses, and spent some of your pocket money relieving the poor, you would show a good deal more wisdom than in spending your lives like so many butterflies."*<sup>59</sup>

—Dwight Moody

*"I want to give you a motto that has been a great help to me. It was a Quaker's motto: 'I expect to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being let me do it now; let me not defer nor neglect it, for I will not pass this way again.'"*<sup>60</sup>

—Dwight Moody

Moody's social work reflected his social vision. In addition to his commitment to conversion, Moody supported some social programs and personal acts of charity. As

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<sup>58</sup> Dwight Moody, *The Gospel Awakening*, 390.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 332.

<sup>60</sup> Dwight Moody, *To the Work! To the Work!* 130, 131.

we have already seen, Moody was involved in providing aid to the poor, beginning with his early days at the Sunday School and with the YMCA. As his career continued, he was involved with two causes in particular: the Temperance Movement and education. In addition, Moody was regularly involved in individual acts of charity.

### 1. Moody and the Temperance Movement

*“These grog shops here are the works of the devil—they are ruining men’s souls every hour. Let us fight against them, and let our prayers go up in our battle.”*<sup>61</sup>

—Dwight Moody

*“The Gospel Temperance is the kind of temperance for me!”*<sup>62</sup>

—Dwight Moody

The relationship between evangelicalism and temperance was close, but complex. Indeed, during the early to mid nineteenth century, the goals of the movement evolved.<sup>63</sup> In the 1820s, nascent temperance organizations advocated moderation and abstention from distilled liquor only. Lyman Beecher, who in 1826 founded the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance, best represented this early phase. The society asserted that alcohol consumption was responsible for domestic disturbances, violent crime and poverty. However, it did not advocate total abstention. As Beecher indicated, he was opposed to “the daily use of ardent spirits.”<sup>64</sup>

By the 1830s, in the face of rising consumption of wine and beer among the working classes, temperance advocates began calling for total abstinence from all liquor. This was graphically illustrated in a “teetotaler” pledge from the “Cleveland

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<sup>61</sup> Quoted in C. L. Thompson, “The Workingman’s Sabbath”, *Chicago Pulpit*, 2, no. 48 (November, 1872), 26, 27.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 531.

<sup>63</sup> John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 181-183.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 182.

Marine Total Abstinence Society” dated 1845. Framed by three biblical texts—Romans 14:23, Proverbs 23:29 and Habakkuk 2:15—and accompanied by the quote famously attributed to Constantine, “In this sign conquer,” the pledge read, “We the undersigned do hereby promise and agree to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, and in all suitable ways discountenance their use.” The “undersigned” included the society president and the pledge. On either side of the text of the printed pledge were columns listing the fruits of temperance and intemperance. “The Fruits of Temperance” included domestic comfort, favour of God and respect of men, peace and plenty, health of body and soul, and eternal happiness. “The Fruits of Intemperance” included ruin of families, anger of God and contempt of men, poverty in its worst forms, insanity, premature death and eternal misery.<sup>65</sup> The popularity of such abstinence or “teetotal” pledges signalled the first shift in the goals and strategies of the antebellum Temperance Movement. The abstinence pledge became both a tactic and a public symbol of this sterner sensibility. The Cleveland Marine Total Abstinence Society was only one of the hundreds of temperance societies that flourished in antebellum cities and towns primarily in the northeast, but also in frontier areas that were settled by emigrants from the northeast.<sup>66</sup>

Charles Finney was largely responsible for the marriage of temperance and revivalism. Moody inherited this emphasis from the revivalist tradition.<sup>67</sup> In addition, as

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<sup>65</sup> To see the actual document, see “The Lost Museum Temperance Archive,” <http://www.lostmuseum.cuny.edu/archives/pledgenewwindow1.html> (accessed August 10, 2009).

<sup>66</sup> For additional reading on the Temperance Movement, see Rebecca Smith, *The Temperance Movement and Class Struggle in Victorian England* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993); Ann-Marie E. Szymanski, *Pathways to Prohibition: Radicals, Moderates, and Social Movement Outcomes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Donald Barr Chidsey, *On and Off the Wagon: A Sober Analysis of the Temperance Movement from the Pilgrims Through Prohibition* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1969); and Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

<sup>67</sup> Hambricke-Stowe, 174; and Tom Calarco, *The Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region* (New York: McFarland, 2004), 28.

a boy, Moody had seen the strong temperance movement in Northfield.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, Moody's embrace of the temperance cause in his adult life was predictable.

Moody was a temperance man. He said, "I am a total abstainer; have never touched liquor and never intend to do so."<sup>69</sup> This was a position he aggressively made known to others. In fact, temperance was a consistent theme in both his revivals and publications.<sup>70</sup> Even a casual glance at any collection of his sermons illustrates his view.

It is also true that at least some of Moody's ongoing temperance preaching was a result of the continuing problems with alcohol he had seen in urban America after the war. Chicago, his adopted home, illustrated the magnitude of the problem. By some estimates, in the 1890s Chicago's saloons were entertaining up to a half million customers a day.<sup>71</sup>

However, Moody's temperance fervour was moderated by his theological convictions. Temperance had a place in his life's work, but it was never the dominant theme of his ministries. The best illustration of this is his relationship with Frances Willard. Willard was instrumental in the formation of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, eventually ascending to its presidency in 1879. Moody had attended some of her sessions with women in Chicago and was deeply impressed. As a result, he invited her to join him at a campaign scheduled for Boston in 1877. Willard eventually agreed and they conducted a number of special meetings for women.

However, as the campaign progressed, tensions developed between the two because

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<sup>68</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 30. As a schoolchild prank, Moody posted a notice on the schoolhouse door of an upcoming lecture from an out-of-town temperance speaker. Of course, the lecturer never appeared, but the meeting drew a large crowd. In addition, the local papers contained regular coverage of numerous temperance meetings during the 1840s and 1850s. Back issues of both the *Northfield Gazette* and *Greenfield Courier* from the early 1800s are available at the Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield, Massachusetts.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 449.

<sup>70</sup> Two collections of Moody's talks on temperance are James B. Dunn, ed., *Moody's Talks on Temperance: with anecdotes and incidents in connection with the Tabernacle temperance work in Boston* (New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1877); and Daniels, *Moody: His Words*.

<sup>71</sup> Miller, *City of the Century*, 191, 446, 447.

Willard insisted on emphasizing temperance as much as evangelism. This was not acceptable to Moody; in fact, he eventually reprimanded Willard for working every spare minute for the cause of temperance, to the neglect, he thought, of her evangelistic duties.<sup>72</sup> Unable to reconcile their differences by the end of the campaign, the two parted.<sup>73</sup>

This episode illustrates Moody's belief in conversion as the foundation for all other lifestyle changes. Perhaps Moody's own words best summed up his position: "To drinking men, as to everyone else, [I say] believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>74</sup> His theological commitments drove his approach to social action. For Moody, pledges of total abstinence should never replace pledges to Jesus, and this was precisely where Moody believed Willard had erred.

## 2. Moody the Educator

*"The sight of poor boys and girls deprived of the means of education would not let him rest until he had provided some method by which their lives should be enriched and made more in accordance with Heaven's designs for them. He dotted this fair plain with houses that young men and young women should have the means of so enlarging their lives that they might be useful to their fellows. His work was in the line of Christ's miracles, which never enriched the object with bounties of land or money or resources, but always gave power to life, making the dead eye to see, touching the dead tongue, the dead ear, the dead limb, and in His highest miracles bringing the dead to life."*<sup>75</sup>

—President H. G. Weston, of the Crozer Theological Seminary

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<sup>72</sup> Frances Willard, *Glimpses of Fifty Years* (Chicago: H. G. Smith, 1899), 358.

<sup>73</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 252-254; and Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 282.

<sup>74</sup> *Springfield [Mass.] Republican*, February 16, 1879. Cited in Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 283.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 563.

*"These [the Northfield and Mount Hermon schools] are the best pieces of work I have ever done. I have been able to set in motion streams which will continue long after I am gone."*<sup>76</sup>

—Dwight Moody

Even to those closest to Moody, his immersion into education initially seemed a bit odd. Henry Drummond expressed amazement that "the greatest evangelist of his day, not when his powers were failing but in the prime of his life and in the zenith of his success, should divert so great a measure of his strength into educational channels."<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, since Moody's own education was severely limited, he hardly seemed a candidate for building schools.

However, it was precisely Moody's lack of education that drove him to promote the cause. On one of his trips to Scotland, Moody quaintly observed that he "regretted exceedingly he had never had a college education himself; but he did not get it, and he was doing the best he could without it."<sup>78</sup>

Moody also had seen the impact of the lack of education on others. The Chicago Sunday School had taught him this truth well. Moody told the story of one of the little boys at the school coming one Sunday barefoot during a snowstorm. Moody immediately went out and purchased the young lad shoes. However, the following Sunday the boy returned barefoot. When Moody inquired about his shoes, the boy told him his parents had sold them for liquor. Moody began to grasp the limited impact of some single acts of charity and the limitations of the Sunday School. The good of the school could be undermined by a corrupt home. After realizing the Sunday School's

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<sup>76</sup> Quoted in McDowell, 9.

<sup>77</sup> Henry Drummond, *Dwight L. Moody: Impressions and Facts* (New York: McClure, Phillips, 1900), 83.

<sup>78</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 194. Moody often lamented his lack of education. "He himself had the scantiest equipment for his life-work, and he daily lamented—though perhaps no one else ever did—his deficiency." Drummond, 85.



limitation, Moody started to dream of a residential school that would provide not only Christian teaching, but Christian teaching and a Christian community for the students.<sup>79</sup>

As Moody progressed in his evangelistic ministry, he also began to understand the strategic value of education. One of the unique characteristics of Moody's revivals was the inquiry room. After each message, those who were interested in Christianity were sent to inquiry rooms where workers were available to answer questions and pray with the inquirers. Moody was in constant need of trained workers for this task. He determined that schools that included training in personal work would be a boon for his revival work.<sup>80</sup>

Moody also knew poverty often accompanied lack of education. By 1876, Moody had purchased a home in Northfield. That summer, while riding in the hills behind his home with his brother Samuel, Moody came upon a small cabin. In front of the home, two young girls sat with their mother plaiting straw hats. The father, an invalid, sat watching the women. Moved by what they saw, Dwight and Samuel stopped to talk to the family. The women's plaiting was the only source of income for the family.<sup>81</sup> The father, although physically limited, was a graduate of Oberlin College; and the daughters shared their father's intelligence. As the Moodys left, both felt despondent about the inevitable future for the girls. They knew the closest school provided only rudimentary education and that the closest high school was thirteen miles away in Greenfield. Even if the girls had a way to travel that distance, they could not leave the family or afford tuition. Consequently, Dwight and Samuel began discussing the idea of a school.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> William Fred Campbell, "Dwight L. Moody and Religious Education" (M. A. Thesis, Yale Divinity School, 1949), 44, 45. A copy is available in the Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>80</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 312-314; James Findlay, "Education and Church Controversy: The Later Career of Dwight L. Moody," *The New England Quarterly*, 39, no. 2 (Jun., 1966), 210-232.

<sup>81</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 319.

<sup>82</sup> Campbell, 49.

By the end of his life, Dwight Moody had been involved in the founding of five different schools: three in Northfield, one in Chicago and one in Glasgow. All of the schools reflected to varying degrees Moody's motives for getting involved in education. The schools offered a strong Christian environment and provided education that was inexpensive, open to all races, and included practical Christian training.

The first, the Northfield Seminary for Women, had its origins in Dwight and Samuel's experience with the sisters plaiting hats. The idea to found a school was further buttressed by Dwight's and Samuel's desire to see a young cousin named Fannie Holton educated.<sup>83</sup>

Three men were particularly helpful as Moody sought to establish a women's school: General O. O. Howard, Henry F. Durant, and H. N. F. Marshall.<sup>84</sup> Howard's role in promoting women's education and influence on Moody has already been noted.<sup>85</sup> Henry F. Durant, a Bostonian, was a more immediate and important source in the founding of Northfield. Moody had been first introduced to Durant in the 1860s. Apparently, the two shared an interest in women's education, and Moody had visited him at the Mount Holyoke Seminary several times. Durant went on to found Wellesley College (chartered in 1870, opened in 1875), and invited Moody to become a trustee. During Moody's Boston campaign in 1877, he was a guest at Durant's home.<sup>86</sup>

Wellesley College provided a model for Moody. When one looks at Wellesley, it is easy to see how Moody was drawn to the school. As Durant conceived it, Wellesley was to have twin emphases: the Bible and an advanced education. Further, consistent with the New England work ethic, Durant insisted the students share in the domestic

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<sup>83</sup> *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary and the Mt. Hermon School* (Chicago: Fleming F. Revel, 1899), 14.

<sup>84</sup> Both Durant and Marshall would serve as Trustees at Northfield. Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 309.

<sup>85</sup> Burnham Carter, *So Much to Learn: The History of the Northfield Mount Hermon School in Commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1980* (Northfield, Mass: Northfield Mount Hermon School, 1976), 17. This history notes Howard's role in the formation of the Northfield school.

<sup>86</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 309.

work of the institution.<sup>87</sup> As Moody became convinced of the benefit of Wellesley's approach, he determined to follow it when formulating Northfield.<sup>88</sup>

Marshall met Moody in Boston in 1877.<sup>89</sup> In 1878, he attended a Bible-reading session at Moody's home in Northfield. Both he and Moody had an interest in education, and Marshall became one of the school's early benefactors.

The Northfield Seminary for Women was opened in November 1879, and the first 25 women students lived in the Moody home while the initial building was being finished. The school reflected Durant's vision for Wellesley, placing a dual emphasis on the Bible and on advanced education. As noted earlier, Moody insisted that the Bible be foundational at each of his schools. In this case, the phrase could be taken literally, as Moody saw to it that a Bible was placed in the cornerstone of each of the school buildings.

The school also expected the girls to work. The household duties were divided among the girls and chores were designed with two goals in mind. The first of these goals was to inculcate a sense of individual responsibility as well as a sense of the value of labour and money. The second goal was to set on an equal footing students of different racial and religious backgrounds. The duties would have a democratizing effect, allowing students to find their "prejudices disappearing in the intimate association of a common task." It was hoped that, through the sharing of household tasks, "mutual sympathy and understanding would be promoted."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> The early settlers in New England – especially the Puritans – referred to America as a wilderness, in part because they sought the spiritual growth associated with coming through the wilderness in the Bible. From their viewpoint, the moral life was one of hard work and determination, and they approached the task of building a new world in the wilderness as an opportunity to prove their own moral worth. What resulted was a land preoccupied with toil. This becomes part of the culture of New England. It is still widely held belief about New England culture and natives. For a detailed analysis see, D. T., Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978).

<sup>88</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 320.

<sup>89</sup> Both Durant and Marshall would serve as Trustees at Northfield. Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 309.

<sup>90</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1930), 308.

The curriculum included two required components, Bible study and music.<sup>91</sup>

The Bible portion was described as including "... an unusual amount of instruction in the Bible. The Bible is to have practically, and not only in name, the first place among text-books used, yet not in the interest of any sect."<sup>92</sup> Music consisted of instruction in singing and reading music. Music instruction was included in every year of study. It was "required of every pupil who is not obviously incapacitated for singing, or who has not already advanced beyond the requirements." The goal was that "all who remain long at the Seminary have the opportunity of learning to read music with freedom, and of considerable voice cultivation."<sup>93</sup> The emphasis on music reflected Moody's belief that music was a critical component in Christian work. Although he was tone deaf, he understood its importance.<sup>94</sup> That initial belief had been verified as he saw the effect of his partner Sankey's singing. Given that Moody hoped the school would produce among its graduates a goodly number of Christian workers, it stands to reason they would emphasize music.

Beyond the two core components, three courses of study were offered. The college preparatory track was designed to prepare those so gifted to enroll in college after their time at Northfield. It included a broad liberal arts curriculum and Latin. The second track, referred to as the "general course," also included Latin, but provided for more electives. The final track, named the "English track," replaced Latin with additional work in sciences, history and literature.<sup>95</sup>

Reflecting Moody's burden for the poor, the schools were "restricted to those who have small means and high aims." They particularly encouraged "the attendance of those who from the necessity of self support or otherwise, have been providentially

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<sup>91</sup> The Bible Study portion of the curriculum was extensive and reflected Moody's views on perspicuity and literal interpretation.

<sup>92</sup> *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary*, 10, 11.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 70, 71.

<sup>94</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 174.

<sup>95</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 322 -24.

hindered in getting the desired education, but who would be determined to make the most of an opportunity here.”<sup>96</sup> In fact, Moody went so far as to say that he had no right to raise funds for those who could afford more expensive schools.<sup>97</sup>

Moody was particularly concerned about Native American and African American girls.<sup>98</sup> Thus, in its first year of operation, Moody sent one of the principals, Harriett W. Tuttle, a Wellesley graduate, out to the Indian reservations in the western United States to “learn what Indian girls were to be found prepared to enter the Seminary, who might be trained to become teachers among their own people.” Moody proposed fully to fund twelve such students. However, when Miss Tuttle identified sixteen, Moody quickly agreed to raise the funds for the additional four as well.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the Native American students, a number of African Americans made up the student body as well.<sup>100</sup>

The school’s 1899 handbook explained Moody’s understanding of the acute need for a school for girls.

[T]he girls in disproportionate numbers stay at home, attend district schools for a few terms, and often live with but little society and meager opportunities fitted to stimulate their minds in healthful directions, or properly develop their resources... . This is the class of girls for whom the Northfield Seminary exists: to help and encourage them, to fit them in the best way for a happy and useful life...”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary*, 9, 10.

<sup>97</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1930), 309.

<sup>98</sup> Some of this emphasis is probably traceable to O. O. Howard.

<sup>99</sup> *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary*, 195, 24.

<sup>100</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 287-288. Dorsett points out that these early classes included Asians as well. He notes Booker T. Washington was invited to speak at the school and some of the early graduates returned to the American south to form orphanages for black children.

<sup>101</sup> *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary*, 19.

Thus, while the school served to prepare women for some sort of Christian service, Moody was interested in seeing women developed as people as well.

In 1890, Moody opened another school for women, the Northfield Bible Training School for Women. Moody had become convinced women were particularly adept at working with the poor. At the same time, he believed most women were not properly trained for such work. Therefore, this school was founded to fill that gap.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to a robust dose of training in the English Bible, the school included instruction in domestic chores. Specifically, “the pupils are taught those branches of domestic economy which are most likely to be useful in their work among the homes of the poor. Much stress is laid upon cooking, especially the preparation of foods for the sick, and a distinct department is also devoted to dressmaking.”<sup>103</sup>

Between the founding of the two women’s schools, Moody founded two other schools: the Mount Hermon Boys’ School in 1881, and what would become the Moody Bible Institute in 1886.

Although Moody’s first school was for women only, he was hopeful of having a school for boys as well. At the dedication of the East Hall at the Northfield School, Moody said in his remarks:

You know that the Lord laid it upon my heart some time ago to organize a school for young women in humbler walks of life, who would never get a Christian education but for a school like this. I talked about this plan of mine to friends, until a number of them gave money to start the school. Some thought I ought to make it for boys and girls, but I thought that if I wished to send my daughter away to school I should prefer to send her to an

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<sup>102</sup> Drummond, 100.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 103.

institution for girls only. I had hoped that money might be given for a boys' school, and now a gentleman who has been here for the last ten days has become interested in my plans, and has given twenty-five thousand dollars toward a school for boys.<sup>104</sup>

The Mount Hermon Boys' School was located on the other side of the river from the Northfield schools. It was a copy of the Northfield School in most ways, as it was also devoted to providing educational opportunities for the poor and orphaned.<sup>105</sup> Like Northfield, the students came from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.<sup>106</sup> Racial diversity was demonstrated during the first graduation ceremony at Mount Hermon. As the programme put it, "William Moody, who goes on to Yale College, spoke for Americans; Louis Johnson, a full-blooded Choctaw, spoke in his own language for the various Indian tribes represented in the school; Chin Loon, in full Chinese dress, spoke for his nationality, which has several representatives at Mount Hermon; Thomas N. Baker, a full-blooded Negro and a general favorite in the school, spoke for his race."<sup>107</sup>

The early years at Mount Hermon were a bit chaotic. A history of the school described the first three years euphemistically as "in a sense experimental."<sup>108</sup> No clear administrative model was established and the curriculum seemed a bit fluid.

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<sup>104</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 521.

<sup>105</sup> The students are described as "...orphans of much promise and no means, and promising boys belonging to the mission Sunday schools of cities. There are many sons of clergymen, of missionaries, of Christian widows, and other Christian parents of very limited means but earnest piety, who have from the first devoted their children to the service of God, and brought them up with that in view. But they can scarcely afford to give the needed schooling to their sons. There are many young men who have been thrown early upon their own resources, who have supported themselves in various trades and clerkships, whose school-life is early broken off..." *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary*, 93, 94.

<sup>106</sup> In 1897, the following denominational affiliations were reported by the students: Congregationalists—82; Baptists—38; Methodists—35; Presbyterians—34; Episcopal—11; Independent—5; Roman Catholic—4; Reformed—3; Christian—2; Swedish Lutheran—1; United Church of Christ—1; Disciples—1; United Presbyterian—1; Friends—1; and 8 claimed no church affiliation. *The Hermonite*, 15 June 1897. Dorsett points out the school's racial diversity. Dorsett, *Passion*, 287, 288.

<sup>107</sup> The class of 1889 included students from 32 nations, with one of the class officers being an ex slave from Virginia. Carter, 49.

<sup>108</sup> Carter, 27.

Nonetheless, twenty-six boys arrived for the first year of classes. Only boys under the age of sixteen were admitted.<sup>109</sup>

Soon after the “experimental years,” the school began to take shape. A basic curriculum emerged that followed Northfield’s with slight variations. For example, in addition to Northfield’s core of Bible and music, an “industrial” core was added.<sup>110</sup> By 1899 it had grown to over 300 students, and the age limit had changed so that only boys over 16 were admitted.<sup>111</sup> The industrial core reflected Moody’s commitment to the value of hard work.<sup>112</sup> The core consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of work around the school, including tending to crops and the garden, attending to the dairy, maintaining the grounds, cutting wood and ice, snow ploughing, teaming, carting refuse, carrying the mail and general cleaning. Each boy was assigned one of these tasks on a rotating basis. Second, the boys were taught a trade. Among the trades practised were carpentry, house-painting, barbering, sailing, carriage-painting, glass-painting, blacksmithing, clock working, printing, harness-working and telegraphing.<sup>113</sup>

Mount Hermon offered only two tracks instead of Northfield’s three. They were the English division and the Classical division. The English division was designed for “(1) The majority of those who do not look forward to attending other schools upon quitting this. (2) Those who have no aptitude for classical study, and do not aim at a literary training. (3) Those who wish to pass directly from Mount Hermon into strictly scientific and technical schools for a professional course.” By comparison, the Classical division was for “those who are ambitious to obtain a liberal education; whose age and love of learning favor it, and who live in hope of taking the full collegiate course.”<sup>114</sup> The number of students enrolled in each track is not known. This is probably because

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<sup>109</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1930), 314.

<sup>110</sup> *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary*, 114.

<sup>111</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1930), 315.

<sup>112</sup> In fact, the schools reflected Moody’s social vision.

<sup>113</sup> *Hand-book of the Northfield Seminary*, 114-17.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 106, 107.



admission was fluid. In fact, this made the school unique among American schools of that era. Boys could attend for a year, drop out and then return. They were free to do this until they graduated. Some only went for two or three years, never graduating, while others took as long as eight years to graduate.<sup>115</sup>

The fourth school founded by D. L. Moody was in Chicago, Illinois. The Moody Bible Institute began in 1886, and the origins of the school lay in the work of Miss Emma Dryer, an educated woman with a burden for poor urban women. In the summer of 1870, Moody met Dryer, who was a principal and teacher at Illinois State Normal University. The following year, while ministering to the needs of thousands who were left homeless by the Chicago Fire, Dryer began developing a programme of Bible study teaching and home visitation for young women. Moody, following the example he had seen with Pennefather's Anglican order of deaconesses, encouraged her in this work and arranged for it to be done under the auspices of his church. Eventually, Dryer expanded the ministry into a training institute for women. In addition to training in the English Bible, the women were taught practical skills like dressmaking and cooking in order to aid the poor women they served. As the work developed, Dryer began to encourage Moody to help her develop an institute for both men and women.<sup>116</sup>

By 1883 Dryer had been joined by other Chicagoans in a concerted prayer effort to get Moody to return to Chicago to build a school.<sup>117</sup> Moody's brother-in-law, Fleming H. Revell, in a religious journal he owned, began to drop hints about the necessity for Moody to return to Chicago to help with a school.<sup>118</sup> In an editorial, Revell summarized Moody's thinking in the following manner.

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<sup>115</sup> Carter, 84.

<sup>116</sup> Moody Bible Institute, "History," [http://www.moodyministries.net/crp\\_MainPage.aspx?id=62](http://www.moodyministries.net/crp_MainPage.aspx?id=62) (accessed August 10, 2009).

<sup>117</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 323.

<sup>118</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 323.

When we remember that the United States leads all countries in the commission of crime we have reason to look about us for the means to remedy this terrible evil. The increase in crime over the last twenty years has been appalling, and there is everywhere a feeling of uneasiness manifest as to the future of the country, with such a state of things growing upon us. If we could have a school that should have for its one aim to train men and women to work successfully among the people, a vast good would be done. Not a school so much to learn to study—that we have—but to learn to direct Christian work—applied Christianity. We have come upon times that demand the services of scores and hundreds of such workers and the nation calls for them but there is no school to train them in.

There are men and women too who could ... preach Christ to all the unevangelized in the centers of America, if not the world.

While Church Congresses are being called to consider the condition of the cities, and what shall be done, an institution could be established now and set in operation to teach men and women how to do this most difficult work now—not necessarily for ministers and missionaries only, but for men and women who will not leave their business or home, but will be lay workers all their lives. What a help such a training would be to all our churches!<sup>119</sup>

He ended the piece by reiterating Moody's call for \$250,000 to start the school.

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<sup>119</sup> *The Record of Christian Work*, 5 (January, 1886), 1.

Moody's burden to form a school can be at least partly explained by the conditions in Chicago. In 1881, fully half of the infants born in Chicago died before reaching the age of five. The children of the slums, the target of Moody's first ministry effort, suffered inordinately. An 1882 study by the Department of Health reported that the deaths in the slums outnumbered those in other city wards by roughly three to one.<sup>120</sup> In 1879 and again in 1885, the city experienced torrential rains that resulted in overflows of the sewer system. The impact on the general populace was catastrophic. After the 1885 rains, the city was wracked by epidemics of typhoid, cholera, dysentery and various other diseases that killed about twelve percent of the city's population. Consequently, as the nineteenth century ended, Chicago became known for having some of the worst slums in the civilized world.<sup>121</sup>

From Moody's perspective, these appalling conditions, combined with the Haymarket riot and a litany of other urban ills, simply reinforced the urgent need for the Chicago school. In a fundraising letter written in 1887, Moody articulated his concerns. He wrote, "Of the 800,000 people of Chicago, probably not more than one-fourth attend regularly some church, Catholic or Protestant, and are directly in sympathy with any movement which upholds law and order, and elevates humanity." He continued, "The formation of societies and organizations not in sympathy with religious work have made rapid increase during the last twenty years. Laws related to Sabbath desecration are unheeded, and intemperance, laziness, and crime, largely resultant there from, are rapidly demoralizing the youth of the city."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Chicago Department of Health, *Report, 1881*, 52, 70-71.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 122, 123 and 191. Jane Addams gave a similar description. She wrote, "...little idea can be given of the filthy and rotten tenements, the foul stables and dilapidated outhouses, the piles of garbage fairly alive with diseased odors, and the numbers of children filling every nook, working and playing in every room, eating and sleeping on every window-sill, pouring in and out of every door, seeming literally to pave every scrap of yard." James Weber Linn, *Jane Addams: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 98, 99.

<sup>122</sup> D. L. Moody, letter sent out by the Chicago Evangelistic Society, June 1887. He also points out arrests for disorderly conduct and crime were over 40,000 in 1886, thus filling the jails to overflowing.

Apparently, Moody connected the disintegration in living conditions with what he perceived as moral disintegration. As previously demonstrated, Moody believed that conversions provided the best antidote to poverty. Thus, his solution was to raise a legion of trained workers to labour among the masses.

The Chicago school was to raise just such a legion of volunteers to act between the preachers and the people to get the gospel directly to the working class. Moody's vision was to fill communities with young people who had been taught to take upon themselves the obligations of living the Christian life in order that their example of Christ might pervade their community and make revivals no longer necessary.<sup>123</sup> His purpose was clear.

Some of you may think I oppose theological seminaries. I want to say I believe we want thoroughly trained men. I don't think we have enough trained men. At the same time, we want some men to stand between the laity and the ministers—I don't know what you would call them—gap men. We want men to stand in the gap. There is such a thing as educating a man away from the rank and file. There is a class of men, I believe, that have got to be raised up to do what we used to call in the war bushwacking. We want irregulars—men that will go out and do work that the educated ministers can't do: get in among the people, and identify themselves with the people.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Olenik, *The Social Philosophy of D. L. Moody*, 34.

<sup>124</sup> Gene Getz, *MBI: The Story of Moody Bible Institute* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 36. Taken from the address at Farwell Hall, Chicago, January 2, 1886. See also Findlay, "Gapmen." These schools were to be trendsetters, among the first of their type. By 1920, thirty-nine similar institutions existed in the U. S. and Canada. For an excellent survey of this movement, see Virginia Brereton, *Training God's Army: The American Bible School 1880 - 1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

Moody believed the working masses needed to be converted, and the Chicago school was created to educate and train people to meet that challenge.

Moody's educational work was not limited to the United States. In fact, he was instrumental in the formation of the Glasgow Bible Institute in Scotland in 1892.<sup>125</sup> In a story similar to the one in Chicago, Moody came alongside someone to shape and give life to that man's vision. This time the initial visionary was J. Campbell White. White, the future Lord Overton, was a chemical manufacturer who was active in the Free Church and later the United Free Church. White and his wife had come under the influence of Moody during Moody's first campaign in Scotland in 1874. After the campaign, the organizing committee transformed itself into the Glasgow United Evangelistic Association, of which White became President. In the first thirty years of its existence, the Association raised, apart from gifts in kind, a sum of over £380,000. Out of this sum, a building was erected on Bothwell Street at a cost of over £100,000. The building housed the Bible Training Institute, the Young Men's Christian Association, Young Men's Christian Club and other institutions.<sup>126</sup>

Like the institute in Chicago, the Glasgow Bible Institute emphasized English Bible and practical training. The school was designed to train workers to go among the poor of Glasgow, doing evangelism and providing practical help.<sup>127</sup> Throughout the founding of the school, Moody was active raising funds, providing advice, encouraging White and rallying the evangelical community in Glasgow. In fact, Moody suggested the name of the school's first principal.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> The college still exists in Glasgow, although it is now known as the International Christian College.

<sup>126</sup> George Eyre-Todd, *Who's Who in Glasgow in 1909: A biographical dictionary of nearly five hundred living Glasgow citizens and of notable citizens who have died since 1st January, 1907* (no publisher and no date).

<sup>127</sup> Bebbington, "Moody as Transatlantic Evangelical" in George, *Mr. Moody*, 89.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 82. For additional reading see F.V. Waddleton, "The Bible Training Institute, Glasgow" (unpublished manuscript, 1979).

When one surveys Moody's educational work, several things become apparent. First, the influence of O. O. Howard, Mueller, Spurgeon and Pennefather is evident. Howard helped form Moody's vision for education. Mueller's Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad and Spurgeon's Pastor's College provided models for Moody to copy. Mueller's school targeted women and both schools were racially mixed. We have already noted the role Pennefather's deaconess movement played in what would become the Northfield Bible Training School and the Moody Bible Institute. The impact these four men had on Moody is clear.

Second, Moody's schools were all geared towards the poor. Although his effectiveness might be debated, there is no doubt that he consistently tried to minister to the poor. His schools sought not only to provide educational opportunities for the poor; they also often included practical instructions on how to help the poor. The schools were subsidized in order to keep costs low so that the poor could attend. Moreover, all the schools required students to work around campus and taught basic trades/skills necessary for self-help and helping others.

Third, all of Moody's schools reflected his commitment to evangelism and the power of regeneration. Moody's goal was that all his schools would produce Christian workers. He certainly was aware that both the Northfield schools would produce men and women who would go into other fields, something of which he obviously approved; nevertheless, even at those two schools, it is evident he hoped they would produce their fair share of Christian workers.

Finally, Moody's educational endeavours were progressive. Specifically, Moody's schools for women were innovative in the field of women's education. Furthermore, all his schools were racially, socially and religiously diverse.

Moody's work for the education of women was consistent with his view of women generally. Although not a feminist, for his time, Moody's position on women

was quite progressive.<sup>129</sup> Women like Frances Willard criticized Moody for not being aggressive enough on the issue of women's roles.<sup>130</sup> However, Moody committed early in his career to a principle he learned from the Revival of 1857: avoid controversial issues. Because of that, he remained silent on questions like the ordination of women.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, he gave woman significant responsibilities and opportunities.

In addition, at times he was willing to undergo criticism in order to bring women to the fore. Therefore, while he may not have permitted women to preside at mixed gender meetings, he did encourage women to pray publicly at such meetings.<sup>132</sup> When he introduced this public prayer by women for the first time in Edinburgh, it created some controversy; Moody continued the practice nonetheless and encouraged the women in their public prayer. He supported women Bible teachers and even argued that women graduates of the Northfield Bible Training School could "stand in the gap" in rural churches. Moody believed those women could lead Bible readings and preach in small churches as needed.<sup>133</sup> Moody was able to support these activities without risking the bulk of his support for his ministry.

He took a similar approach on racial questions. As was noted, Moody aggressively recruited students from diverse racial backgrounds. His schools were never segregated racially and he used African Americans in his revival work. During his first campaign in the United Kingdom, Moody employed the "Jubilee Singers," an all-black choir from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. First used at Edinburgh in 1874, the

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<sup>129</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 252-254.

<sup>130</sup> Frances Willard to Emma Moody quoted in Frances E. Willard, *Happy Half Century* (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1894), 261-268.

<sup>131</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 303-305. In fact, Moody never spelled out his position on women's ordination.

<sup>132</sup> Mark James Toone, "Evangelicalism in Transition: A Comparative Analysis of the Work and Theology of D. L. Moody and His Protégés, Henry Drummond and R. A. Torrey" (Ph. D. Diss., 1988, University of St. Andrew's), 94.

<sup>133</sup> Clipping from a newspaper dated 13 September 1898, History File, Northfield Bible Training School, Northfield Archives.

choir traveled on and off with Moody for the rest of his tour, concluding with an extended appearance in London.

Moody had first met the choir while in Newcastle, when they attended one of his meetings. As he described it, "There were about three million of that race just coming out of the state of slavery, and the Jubilee Singers were traveling through Christendom, and laboring hard to collect funds, for the purpose of lifting up their brethren from the depths of ignorance in which they lived." Someone suggested to Moody that he include them in his meetings in Edinburgh. Initially, Moody resisted, remarking, "No, I suppose they are just merely public singers ..." However, upon learning of their commitment to Christianity, he became an immediate supporter and invited their participation in the meetings. It was a controversial move that met some initial resistance. However, Moody continued including the choir and eventually the naysayers were won over.<sup>134</sup>

Moody demonstrated his appreciation of their ministry by calling on them again during the London phase of his 1875 campaign. As a Fisk University historian described it, shortly after the choir arrived in London, Moody contacted them and bid them sing that afternoon as part of his London meetings. The choir responded by "temporarily turning from their concerts to help win souls. The company secured quarters in London and labored with Moody for a month singing to approximately 10,000 to 12,000 people daily."<sup>135</sup>

After returning to America, Moody made an unplanned trip to Georgia in 1875. This trip demonstrated the limits of his commitment to integration. Moody's foray into the American South was somewhat novel. Although the earlier revivalist of the First Great Awakening, George Whitefield, had worked extensively in the South, the

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<sup>134</sup> Mrs. Robert Peddie (ed.) *A Consecutive Narrative of the Remarkable Awakening in Edinburgh, under the labours of Messers Moody and Sankey* (London: S. W. Partridge and Co., 1874), 45-6.

<sup>135</sup> Joe M. Richardson, *A History of Fisk University*, (University, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1980), 36. Quoted in George, *Mr. Moody*; and Thomas E. Corts, "D. L. Moody: Payment on Account," *George, Mr. Moody*, 66.



champion of the Second Great Awakening, Charles Finney, never ventured into the Southern states, and was never confronted with the issue of segregated meetings. By going to Georgia, Moody would run headlong into this controversy.

When Moody arrived in Georgia, he was astonished to find the meetings were segregated. All of his previous meetings had been fully integrated. Earlier that same year the congregation at one of his New York meetings had been described as “a mixed assemblage of all classes; some very poor, a few not very clean. Many black faces dot the congregation.”<sup>136</sup> His initial response to what he saw in Georgia was moral indignation. Moody declared that some Southern whites “might possibly be astonished some day to see these blacks marching into the kingdom of heaven while they themselves were shut out.”<sup>137</sup> The response from the white community in the South was swift and ferocious. If Moody were “endeavoring to change the relation of the black and white races,” he would face the “contempt and abhorrence of our entire people.”<sup>138</sup>

Before the issue spiralled completely out of control, Major Whittle intervened. Whittle understood Moody’s indignation; however, he also understood the South. Whittle told Moody that if they insisted on integrating the meetings, the white population of Georgia would not attend.<sup>139</sup> In the end, Moody followed Whittle’s advice. For the next two decades, when Moody ventured into the South his meetings were segregated.<sup>140</sup>

However, it was clear Moody was not comfortable with his decision and tried to hold separate meetings for blacks in the South. In the 1880s, he offered to go to

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<sup>136</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 277.

<sup>137</sup> Findlay, 279.

<sup>138</sup> *Liberal Christian*, 30 (May 20, 1876), 9; letter to the *Atlanta Constitution* (no date), quoted in the *New York Times*, May 10, 1876.

<sup>139</sup> Whittle Diary, April, April 28, 1876. Whittle claimed that, “not to have done it would have... kept the white people away” and that there was, “no way we could carry on the meetings” without them being segregated. One of the reasons Whittle knew the South was he had served on General Sherman’s staff during his march to the sea during the Civil War. Dorsett indicates the diary was lost from the archives of Moody Bible Institute. However, during my research I found the diary. It is in the United States National Archives in Washington, D. C.

<sup>140</sup> Findlay, 279. Findlay carefully documents Moody’s meetings in the South.

Louisville, Kentucky, to hold a series of meetings designed exclusively for blacks. He seemed to be searching for a way to reach blacks in the South, while maintaining a white audience. Consequently, Moody tolerated segregated meetings in order to maintain white audiences.<sup>141</sup>

By the 1890s, however, Moody could no longer accept his own decision. At a series of meetings in Texas in 1895, Moody began defying Jim Crow laws and segregation. On entering the site of the planned revival, Moody became enraged when he saw a fence designed to separate blacks from whites. He was so angry he tried physically to tear the rail down. Although the rail withstood this initial assault, by the time of the meetings, workers had torn it down. From this point on, his meetings were integrated.<sup>142</sup>

Such events illustrate the limits to which Moody went to conform to middle-class sensibilities. Though Moody always tried to keep what he saw as unnecessary hindrances from getting in the way of preaching the gospel, he tried to conform because he believed the gospel would ultimately solve whatever problems arose. Clearly, he would only tolerate segregation for so long; even though it would limit his audience, Moody concluded he could no longer violate his conscience. By 1895, he had reached his limit on the issue of segregation.

Responses to Moody in the black community were mixed. One pastor, outraged at Moody's decision to segregate the meetings in Georgia, declared that he would not allow Moody to preach in a bar room, let alone a church.<sup>143</sup> Ida B. Wells commented, "I remember very clearly that when Mr. Moody had come to the South with his revival sermons the notices printed said that the Negroes who wished to attend his meetings

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<sup>141</sup> Findlay, 281.

<sup>142</sup> Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion and American Nationalism, 1865-1898*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2005), 144, 145.

<sup>143</sup> Findlay, 280.

would have to go into the gallery or that a special service would be set aside for colored people only.” Wells found this to be despicable.<sup>144</sup>

However, other blacks were more circumspect with their comments. Booker T. Washington thought that Moody’s work was beneficial to people of all races.<sup>145</sup> A letter from pastor L. H. Smith of an A.M.E. church in Savannah, Georgia, began, “We, the Negroes of Savannah, thank you more than language can express ... for the services you gave us at our churches.” The letter goes on to describe the “good and lasting results of your brotherly and divinely directed labors among us.” Smith commented that the local paper, *The Morning News*, had done well when it described Moody’s work among the Negroes during the Civil War. However, it would have done “itself, the South, the Colored people, yourself and the Master a lasting service had it reported your service with us, some of the many good things you said to us ...” The letter concluded with Smith noting he and another pastor had collected \$15.03 to support Moody’s effort to place literature in prisons and poor houses.<sup>146</sup> Clearly, while Moody had critics among the black churches in the South, he also had a good share of supporters.

One other episode from Moody’s work provides some insight. During the Spanish–American War, Moody worked again with the YMCA in its efforts to minister to troops. Under Moody’s direction, work was established among troops of colour with “colored young men of influence and ability in charge.” Apparently, the effort was well regarded and a “prominent colored minister” concluded it was the “most practical and most helpful work I have ever seen carried on among the colored people.” The effort “received the approbation of all students of the race problem.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Alfreda M. Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice: the Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 111-2, 151.

<sup>145</sup> Evensen, *God’s Man for the Gilded Age*, 4.

<sup>146</sup> Letter from L. H. Smith to Dwight Moody, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1896. Copies of the letter are available in Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, D. L. Moody Papers, and the Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>147</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 185.

When one considers Moody's approach to racial issues, his toleration of segregated meetings must be weighted against the racial openness of his schools. Moreover, his response was consistent with his commitment to evangelism. As we have seen, Moody believed conversion was the ultimate remedy for social ills. It seems reasonable to assume he felt the same way about racism. Therefore, his ultimate goal was to ensure the presentation of the gospel to the largest number of people. If that meant tolerating segregated meetings for a period, then Moody was prepared to deal with that distasteful reality. However, when it came to his schools, Moody was committed to a fully integrated student body.

### 3. Moody's other Social Work

In addition to his work as an educator, Moody engaged in numerous acts of personal charity as prompted by his theology and his zeal for evangelism. Because of his commitment to charitable action, Moody earned a reputation as a man of great generosity.<sup>148</sup>

His son William recounted a story of Moody's encounter with a beggar after a cab ride. Recognizing Moody, the man approached him and asked for money for food. Moody had just paid the cab fare and was completely out of cash. Moved by the man's plight, he turned back to the cabbie and asked to borrow money to give to the beggar.<sup>149</sup>

Moody's sermons often contained stories of poor mothers whose children died from accident or disease, and whose fathers had left them destitute because of alcoholism. When Moody encountered such circumstances, he would personally pay for the burial of the child and preach at the funeral.<sup>150</sup> These types of stories are repeated numerous times in the various biographies of Moody.

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<sup>148</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 292 – 297. Dorsett presents a sampling of stories drawn from students at Moody's school that demonstrate Moody's generosity toward the students.

<sup>149</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 514.

<sup>150</sup> Dwight Moody, "The Gospel Awakening," 389, 390.

As we have seen, Moody served in the United States Christian Commission during the American Civil War. As part of that work, Moody was instrumental in establishing an employment bureau. The bureau was created to help wounded soldiers find employment. In 1865, the bureau found work for 1,435 men, 124 boys and 718 girls. Between 1867–68 it secured another 3,411 jobs, and it found employment for nearly 9,000 people from 1869 to 1871. In addition, the bureau provided temporary employment for scores of others.<sup>151</sup>

We have already seen how Moody provided for the physical needs of families in his early days at the YMCA and the Sunday School. He continued to meet the physical needs of others throughout his career with these institutions.<sup>152</sup> This commitment was in evidence after the Chicago fire. Almost immediately after the fire, Moody, in connection with the Sunday School and Illinois Street Church, had a large structure erected to provide temporary shelter for displaced people. Moody raised the funds for the building and helped recruit the staff for the enterprise. Food was prepared and served daily. Religious counsel and instruction were also provided.<sup>153</sup>

The Illinois Street Church, later named Moody Church, was designed particularly for the poor. It was located in the centre of Chicago's poor north side at the corner of Illinois and Wells Street. The design was simple, so simple that one observer remarked, "It looks as if pains had been taken to make it as plain as possible so that no one, however poor, might be driven away by any outward display."<sup>154</sup> The plain sign outside the building that read, "Ever welcome to this house of God are strangers and the poor," reinforced the architecture.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 183; and Chartier, 41.

<sup>152</sup> The YMCA joined with the Chicago Theological Seminary and Hahnemann Medical College in response to the 1866 cholera epidemic that swept through Chicago. Together they "nursed the sick, offered prayers, performed last rites, and helped bury the dead." Dorsett, 125, 26.

<sup>153</sup> Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 37.

<sup>154</sup> Dorsett, 122.

<sup>155</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 124.

The Bible Institute Colportage Association represented another of Moody's efforts to minister to the poor. Founded in 1894, the association grew out of Moody's frustrated efforts to locate inexpensive Christian literature at a bookstore in Wisconsin. Unable to find literature at a low cost, he established his own publishing service. A brief description, found in the back of one of its 1908 books, summarized its work, "[T]his Association has continued to deliver, through means of the printed page, messages that convict of sin, quicken the devotional life, arouse to evangelistic effort and missionary activity. It has carried the gospel where church privileges were wanting, or not embraced..."<sup>156</sup>

The Colportage Association aided the poor in multiple ways. First, it addressed what Moody considered their greatest need—conversion. The literature's low prices made the materials available to the working poor. Second, it provided an employment opportunity. The 1908 book cited above included a call for colportage workers. It pointed out that "employment is presented you at the smallest outlay of money and the least possible risk of failure or loss. The remuneration is in accordance with interest, time and energy expended." Further, "the plan is workable and thoroughly tried as one of the great avenues through which the non-church goer can be reached. It is applicable in YOUR community, whether village, town or city."<sup>157</sup> After its founding, many of the students at the Mount Hermon school worked as colportage agents to help pay for their schooling. Finally, Moody used the Association to provide for such undertakings as free libraries for prisons and houses for the poor.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Dwight Moody, *Heaven*, 124.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> G.W. Coleman, letter to D. L. Moody, January 24, 1899, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL. This letter contains details of the association's work in this regard. It includes a report on the current inventory of books and Bibles, the numbers of volumes sent to various prisons and plans to seek donations to increase the number of books available to be sent out. It also notes plans to translate books into Spanish for distribution. The letter ends with an account of the impact on the prisoners in one prison.

In addition to his own efforts, Moody's message and work spawned other charitable acts for the poor. The effects of Moody's campaign in Glasgow provide an excellent illustration of this fact. The aforementioned Lord Overton, J. Campbell White, identified Moody as the crucial figure in the formation of his activist spirit, and became the key figure in various charitable enterprises that developed out of Moody's labors. Historian David Bebbington has described the various charitable enterprises that sprang from Moody's work in Glasgow. One of the most prominent was The Glasgow Tent Hall. The Tent Hall was built in 1876 for the United Evangelical Association, which had been meeting since 1874 in a mission tent on Glasgow Green. The Association was heavily involved in the Temperance Movement. On Saturday evenings, the Association in the Tent Hall offered the alternative entertainment of lantern slide shows that illustrated the evils of alcohol. The Tent Hall also hosted the Sabbath Morning Free Breakfast and the Glasgow Poor Children's Sabbath Dinner. Some of Moody's other legacies in Glasgow, as noted by Bebbington, included the Poor Children's Day Refuges, where children were cared for while their parents were at work, and the Crippled Children's League of Kindness, in which West-end children were individually linked with East-end cripples. There were also the Weary Workers' Rest at Dunoon, the Homes for Destitute Children at Saltcoats, a Rescue Home for girls in danger of going astray, the Poor Children's Fresh-Air Fortnight Homes and William Quarrier's Orphan Homes of Scotland.<sup>159</sup> In 1898, after surveying the impact of Moody's work in Glasgow, Sir George Adam Smith concluded that the Moody's efforts had been a great force for civic righteousness in Glasgow.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Bebbington, *Dominance*, 48; and Andrew Aird, *Glimpses of Old Glasgow*, (Glasgow: Aird & Coghill, 1894), 200. Bebbington also points out that "A group of men associated with the Glasgow campaign threw themselves into politics to achieve Christian objectives." David Bebbington, "Moody" in George, 87.

<sup>160</sup> Chartier, 58.

Although it predated him, another institution experienced a boon as a result of Moody's work in Scotland. Carruber's Close Mission in Edinburgh had been established in 1858 to provide a Sunday School for city children. The work quickly expanded to include "almost every form of Christian enterprise and philanthropy. Every age and class were embraced in their mission."<sup>161</sup> When Moody was in Edinburgh in 1883, he became acquainted with the mission and embraced their ministry. Struck by their lack of space, Moody embarked on a fundraising effort on their behalf. Before leaving Edinburgh, he had raised 10,000 pounds sterling and had preached as the cornerstone for their new building was laid.<sup>162</sup> By the time of his death, Moody was responsible for many such mission halls throughout the British Isles.<sup>163</sup>

In Liverpool, Moody worked to establish the British Workingman Company Limited. This was a series of houses of refreshment designed to provide inexpensive meals for workers as an alternative to the saloon. While conducting a campaign in the city, Moody invited a Reverend Charles Garrett to speak for ten minutes. Garrett presented his belief that the masses needed an alternative to the saloon, and suggested a series of cheap eating establishments. Moody began whispering to a number of the men on the platform while Garrett finished his talk. When Garrett finished, Moody sprang to his feet and announced the formation of the British Workingman Company, an organization designed to meet Garrett's challenge. The project prospered and was copied by innumerable towns and cities throughout Great Britain.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> William Reid, *Authentic Records of Revival now in Progress in the United Kingdom* (London: James Nisbet, 1860), 452.

<sup>162</sup> Carrubbers Christian Centre, "History," <http://www.carrubbers.org/about/history/> (accessed August 13, 2009).

<sup>163</sup> Chartier, 59.

<sup>164</sup> Chartier, 59, 60.



## C. Conclusion

Dwight Moody believed that urban social issues were the product of human sinfulness. Therefore, the only ultimate solution was personal conversion. Nevertheless, he was also committed to work in various ways to alleviate human suffering. Because of his high regard for the Bible, Moody supported charitable work, especially emphasizing education for the poor during the latter phases of his career. The schools he founded were significant because they showed the value he placed on education to improve the lot of the poor. Moody believed that the Bible taught love for others, especially for the poor. Therefore charity, especially when directed toward the poor, was appropriate if also subject to the Bible's teaching about laziness. Consequently, charity was never to be practised in a way that promoted sloth. Further, because of his understanding of sin and his premillennialism, Moody simply had no confidence in solutions to social maladies that were not rooted in conversion. Moody's theological conviction was that individual humans could not ultimately solve their sin problem and the trajectory of human civilization was inevitability downward. These theological ideas provided the primary framework for Moody's social vision and social work.

## VI. THE INFLUENCE OF DWIGHT LYMAN MOODY: TRIBUTES, LEGACY AND ANALYSIS

The first three chapters of this thesis examined the various events and individuals that played significant roles in the formation of Dwight Moody's theology. Chapter four presented the theological convictions Moody held as a result, particularly those convictions that were indicative of his social vision, while chapter five explored his social vision and social activities.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it will briefly examine the responses to Moody's death, including some of the evaluations of his work and his institutional legacy in order to show the breadth of Moody's influence. The second and more important purpose is to analyze Moody's social vision and its impact on the evangelical world. Specifically, I will seek to provide answers to the questions the thesis raised in the introduction.

### A. Tributes and Legacy

*"I do not know whether I dare say what I am now about to speak to you. I asked a brother minister this afternoon, and he would not take the responsibility, but after thinking it over I will say it. I believe if Christ had actually lived in the body of our dear brother and had been subject to the same limitations that met him, he would have filled up his life much as D. L. Moody filled up his, and for that reason I say, after the most careful thought, I had rather be D.L. Moody lying dead in his coffin than to be the greatest man alive in the world to-day."*<sup>1</sup>

—Dr. H.G. Weston, of the Crozier Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, 1.

*"I would rather be Dwight Moody dead and in his grave, than any man now living."*<sup>2</sup>

—Boston Evening Transcript

Whole books have been given to the subject of Moody's influence on Protestant Christianity, so this is far from an exhaustive study.<sup>3</sup> However, within the confines of this thesis, it is necessary to explore the range of Moody's influence in order to begin to understand the significance of his view.

Perhaps one of the best indicators of Moody's significance is the attention focused on him during the last weeks of his life. Indeed, many in the English-speaking world were fixated on Moody's final days at his home in Northfield. Dwight Moody had become one of the most widely travelled and quoted figures of the Gilded Age. Moody had risen to become, in David Bebbington's words, the "archetypical Evangelical."<sup>4</sup> At the time of his death he was arguably the best known and most admired religious figure in the English-speaking world.

A sampling of newspaper accounts following his death in December 1899 provides a glimpse into the reputation he enjoyed. A Boston paper drew parallels to Lincoln: "American boys in the next century should study the lives of a model patriot and its preacher of righteousness."<sup>5</sup> The *New York Times* exclaimed that, "the death of no man now living could so greatly stir the hearts and minds of so great a multitude on both sides of the ocean."<sup>6</sup> The *Herald* chimed in, adding, "No man living has made more friends."<sup>7</sup> In Chicago, Moody's adopted home, the *Tribune* proclaimed, "The

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<sup>2</sup> *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 22, 1899, 6. Quoted in Evensen, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Two of the most recent books that explore Moody's influence on evangelicalism are David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Intervarsity Press, 2005) and Timothy George, ed, *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition* (New York: T. T. Clark, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> George, *Mr. Moody*, 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Boston Journal*, December 27, 1899, 3. Quoted in Evensen, 9.

<sup>6</sup> *New York Times*, December 24, 1899, 22. Quoted in Evensen, 9.

<sup>7</sup> *New York Herald*, December 23, 1899, 4. Quoted in Evensen, 9.

death of Brother Moody, was a great grief in this great, bustling, worldly city.”<sup>8</sup> The *Chicago Daily News* called Moody, “...the greatest lay preacher and evangelist of this or any other time.”<sup>9</sup> In London the *Daily Telegraph* opined, “Our bishops have back of them a state income, great cathedrals, and a small army of paid helpers and musicians... But where our bishops have reached tens, this man has reached thousands.”<sup>10</sup> The *Evening News* echoed these sentiments, proclaiming it impossible “to exaggerate Moody’s phenomenal success.”<sup>11</sup> Even *The Catholic World* declared, “His prevailing qualities were tireless energy, amazing common sense, unquestioning faith, and human sympathy rarely equaled.”<sup>12</sup>

At Moody’s funeral service, Theodore Cuyler estimated that, on average, Moody spoke to 40,000 to 50,000 people a week. One biographer notes that A. T. Pierson’s assertion that Moody presented his brand of the gospel by pen or voice to 100 million people is actually a conservative figure.<sup>13</sup> J. Wilbur Chapman, a colleague of Moody’s, wrote in the year following Moody’s death that he “reached more people during his lifetime than any other man possibly in the world’s history.”<sup>14</sup> Even his critics were forced into grudging admiration. One in particular remarked, “In his rage to save souls he traveled more than a million miles, addressed more than a hundred million people, and personally prayed and pled with seven hundred and fifty thousand sinners. All in all, it is probably [true], as his admirers claim, that he reduced the population of hell by a million souls.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, December 23, 1899, 12. Quoted in Evensen, 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Chicago Daily News*, December 22, 1899, 4. Quoted in Evensen, 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Telegraph* (London), December 23, 1899, 2. Quoted in Evensen, 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Evening News* (London) December 23, 1899, 2. Quoted in Evensen, 10.

<sup>12</sup> *The Catholic World* quoted in McDowell et al., 13, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 10. Gundry cites Will H. Houghton and Chas. T. Cook, *Tell Me About Moody* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1936), 117. For similar statistical estimates see Pollock, *Moody: A Biographical Portrait*, 166, 242, 283-84.

<sup>14</sup> Chapman, *Life and Work*, vi, 17-21.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Dorsett, *Passion*, 21.

As a result, evangelical Protestantism became virtually synonymous with D. L. Moody. Indeed, Martin Marty claimed, "The Chicago-based evangelist could plausibly have been called Mr. Revivalist and perhaps even Mr. Protestant."<sup>16</sup> Lyle Dorsett concurred, stating, "Dwight L. Moody's name is synonymous with evangelism and revivalism."<sup>17</sup> Timothy George saw Moody as "...the founder of contemporary interdenominational evangelicalism."<sup>18</sup> George Marsden presented Moody as the head of a broad evangelical empire that towered over the American religious landscape toward the end of the nineteenth century. Marsden contended, "Scarcely a leader in American Protestantism in the next generation, it seemed, had not at some time been influenced by Moody."<sup>19</sup>

The same could almost be said of his impact on the United Kingdom. He travelled to Britain on six different occasions and his stays were always lengthy, ranging from a few months up to several years. In his great campaign of 1873–1875, we previously noted that the London portion single-handedly drew over two and a half million attendees.<sup>20</sup> During the campaign, figurines of Moody and Sankey were hawked on the streets along with copies of Moody's American cap. Even some popular poetry of the day reflected their influence. One line read, "The rich the poor, the good the bad, have gone mad over Moody and Sankey."<sup>21</sup> In the summer of 1875, British royalties on the Sankey hymnal totaled \$35,000, or seven thousand pounds sterling. Although the

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<sup>16</sup> Martin Marty, "Introduction" in *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837-1899*, ed. James F. Findlay (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 21.

<sup>18</sup> George, *Mr. Moody*, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 206, 207. Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 171. The two and one-half million figure is a total number of attendees and does not allow for people who attended more than once.

<sup>21</sup> Evensen, *God's Man*, 44. Evensen cites material in the *Moodyana Collection* at the Moody Bible Institute. See especially box 8, folder 96. The doggerel is the first cited in an undated issue of the *British Weekly* in the folder. Two figurines are also in the collection.

records are sketchy, estimates are that, by the end of World War II, British publishers had single-handedly sold between 50 and 80 million copies of the hymnals.<sup>22</sup>

The number of centenary celebrations held in Moody's honour is further evidence of his continued influence in the United Kingdom. Most notable was the gathering at the Royal Albert Hall in London on February 5, 1937.<sup>23</sup> The programme exclaimed,

Dwight Lyman Moody was beyond question the greatest Evangelist since Whitefield. In the United States, his name has been bracketed with that of Abraham Lincoln as the two most typical Americans who have risen from obscurity to world renown. In Great Britain and Ireland his reputation stands as high as in his native land.<sup>24</sup>

Sponsored by the "National Council for Moody Centenary Celebrations" the event was hosted by the Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair. In addition to the singing of hymns, speakers included the Bishop of Norwich, Sir Thomas Inskip, the Very Rev. Alexander Martin, Prebendary Wilson W. Carlile, Commander R.G. Studd, R.N., Dr. Harry Ironside and Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, DD.<sup>25</sup> In all the meetings, one of the themes was Moody's impact on education and the role his school played in bettering individuals.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> George, *Mr. Moody*, 113.

<sup>23</sup> In London alone, the other services included a simultaneous event held at Westminster Chapel, nightly meetings running from February 8<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> at Central Hall and weekly meetings, February 7, 14, 21 and 28<sup>th</sup> at the Lyceum Theatre. Additionally, there was a broadcast service from the Lyceum on March 7<sup>th</sup>. *Souvenir Programme of Moody National Centenary Celebration, 1837-1937* (London: Royal Albert Hall, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1937).

<sup>24</sup> *Souvenir Programme*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 14, 15.

<sup>26</sup> For example see the address by Dr. James Reid from the Westminster Chapel celebration. It is found in a pamphlet entitled *D. L. Moody British Recognition Services, 1937*, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL, 5-6.

Throughout his life, Moody maintained at least cordial relationships with virtually every major popular Protestant leader in America and the United Kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

We have earlier noted the broad spectrum of belief they represented. Most of these thinkers acknowledged a debt to Moody. In his biography, James Findlay Jr. concluded, “Early writers again and again testify to the overpowering impact of the man’s personality on all those with whom he came in contact.”<sup>28</sup>

Moody’s importance to Protestantism was also demonstrated by the struggle to appropriate his legacy. One of the more interesting episodes began with a 1923 article in *Christian Century* entitled, “Where Would Mr. Moody Stand?” The article tried to distance Moody from Fundamentalism and argued that the Moody Bible Institute no longer reflected the views of Mr. Moody. It sparked a series of articles in a number of magazines rebutting or supporting the *Christian Century*’s claim. The articles would continue until 1926.<sup>29</sup> While this debate was not about his social vision or involvement, it was centred on three critical theological beliefs that drove his social vision, his view of the Bible, his commitment to premillennialism and his concept of God’s love. Fundamentalists asserted fidelity with Moody by pointing to their common commitment to the Bible and premillennialism, whereas Modernists claimed Moody’s commitment to a charitable spirit to others with whom they disagreed. The articles tell us more about the rancour of the 1920s than about Moody’s theology.

Moody was also held in high regard in the business community. His list of supporters included the most prominent robber barons of the Gilded Age, including Marshall Field, George Armour, Cornelius Vanderbilt II, George Pullman, John

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<sup>27</sup> A brief sample would include Lyman Abbott, Washington Gladden, Henry Weston, William Rainey Harper, A. C. Dixon, R. A. Torrey, James M. Gray, A. T. Pierson, and C. I. Scofield in America, and George Adam Smith, Henry Drummond, R. W. Dale, F. B. Meyer, Horatius and Andrew Bonar, George Mueller, Andrew Murray and Charles Spurgeon in the United Kingdom.

<sup>28</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 21.

<sup>29</sup> Gundry, *Love Them In*, 200-01. Gundry briefly outlines this debate, citing *The Christian Century* articles and numerous other such attempts.

Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, William E. Dodge, John Wanamaker, John V. Farwell and Cyrus McCormick. Moody had an uncanny ability to garner financial support for his endeavours from these people.

Given this wide sphere of influence, it is not surprising that at his death, messages of condolence literally came from around the globe, including notes from prominent men like William Jennings Bryan, Booker T. Washington and William McKinley, then President of the United States.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond his influence on individuals, Moody also shaped a number of institutions. Some of these have already been explored: the YMCA, the Sunday School movement, the United States Christian Commission and various schools. However, other institutions Moody helped develop are worth noting. For example, Moody was influential in developing summer Bible conferences. Apparently, he came up with the idea of having a summer conference at Northfield during a prayer meeting in Cleveland in 1879.<sup>31</sup> The first Northfield conference was held in 1880. The conferences were a combination of Bible teaching, special prayer meetings and exploring various methods of ministry used in the United States and overseas.<sup>32</sup> As such, they resembled Keswick Conventions or Niagara Conferences. The preaching roster over the years at these conferences continued to demonstrate the wide sweep of Moody's influence and illustrated the transatlantic nature of his work. Speakers included G. Campbell Morgan, A. T. Pierson, F. B. Meyer, A. A. Bonar, Henry Drummond, George Adam Smith, A. J. Gordon, W. J. Erdman, R. C. Morgan, George C. Needham, J. E. K. Studd and Hudson Taylor. Many of the speakers would later talk of the personal impact the conferences

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<sup>30</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 420-21.

<sup>31</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 339.

<sup>32</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 361-63.



had on them. Pierson, Meyer and A. A. Bonar talked of the sense of power they felt at the events.<sup>33</sup>

Over the years, these conferences increasingly featured an emphasis on youth and often emphasized foreign mission work. The combination of these emphases led to the formation of the influential Student Volunteer Movement. Perhaps one of the most notable of the early volunteers was John R. Mott, who later became a leader in Protestant mission work in the early twentieth century. In fact, the relationship between Moody and Mott developed to the point that Moody offered the directorship of what would become the Moody Bible Institute to Mott in 1893.<sup>34</sup> Portions of the following letter written from Northfield, dated spring 1889, indicate Moody's commitment to these conferences and to the Student Volunteer Movement.

For about twelve years a work has been going on among colleges of this country by which nearly 15,000 undergraduate students in 275 institutions are now organized for Bible study, to help each other in the Christian life and for aggressive Christian work among their fellow-students.... [D]uring the past two years and a half, over one hundred students have sailed for foreign mission fields under their denominational Missionary Boards.... This work should be continued and extended."<sup>35</sup>

Moody also left a legacy in publishing. In the 1870s, largely in response to the publication of unauthorized biographies and collections of his sermons, Moody

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<sup>33</sup> For a complete discussion see: M. Bonar, ed. *Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Life* (London: Banner of Truth, 1960), 334; Delevan Pierson, *Arthur T. Pierson: A Biography* (London: James Nisbet, 1912), 191-92; W. Y. Fullerton, *F. B. Meyer: A Biography* (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Christian Alliance: n.d.), 41.

<sup>34</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 355. The Student Volunteer Movement would eventually become one of the main impetuses for the Edinburgh Conference in 1910. Findlay notes the close relationship that developed between Moody and Mott. He cites several letters indicating Moody offered the directorship of the Bible Institute in Chicago to Mott in 1893. Mott turned it down, but located some of the offices for the Student Volunteer Movement in the facilities of the Moody Bible Institute.

<sup>35</sup> D. L. Moody, letter, Spring 1889, *Moodyana Collection*, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

convinced his brother-in-law, Fleming Revell to go into publishing. Revell became the first authorized publisher of Moody materials. This eventually led to the Fleming H. Revell publishing company. However, Moody also had a vision for a Christian alternative to “dime novels” that had become popular after the Civil War. That vision led to the establishment of a colportage department at the Moody Bible Institute. The department was dedicated to getting Moody’s sermons, portions of scripture and other Christian literature out to as many people as possible by providing cheap paper editions at the lowest price possible. Moody also used the colportage department to reach prisons by providing them with libraries from the colportage titles. Eventually the colportage department at Moody Bible Institute would become Moody Press.<sup>36</sup>

It is apparent that Moody was not only a dominant figure in his day, but that he cast a long shadow over evangelicalism in the decades to come. When surveying his influence, several conclusions can be drawn. First, Moody’s long-term influence was a function of his personality and not his intellect. His genius was practical; he was an organizer and problem solver rather than an academic. Those who surrounded and observed him did not speak of his brilliant mind. As we have seen time and again, they admired his commitment, hard work and ability to get things done. They were drawn to his humility and willingness to share. They saw how he avoided the temptation to make himself the centre of his work. They observed his generous spirit that embraced a broad spectrum of people from different Christian traditions. They knew Moody was willing to do hard and thankless tasks. They watched him love the unlovely. These traits drew people to Moody.

In Moody, others saw a man who got things done and were amazed at his capacity to work. This trait produced the second portion of his legacy, the numerous institutions he left behind. Schools, conferences, publishing houses, churches, missions

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<sup>36</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 328-340.

and volunteer societies all to varying degrees contained Moody's spiritual DNA. These institutions served to extend his influence into the twentieth century. They comprise a lasting legacy and provide the clearest illustration of who Moody was and what he did.

Examining Moody's institutional legacy, several common traits can be observed. All the institutions were nonsectarian and reflected most of his theological commitments: the primacy of the Bible, the three Rs, evangelism and the need for practical Christian work. In addition, most of these institutions directed their work toward poor city dwellers.

This is the legacy germane to this thesis. Dwight Moody provided for Protestant Christianity in the English-speaking world an answer to the problem of urbanization. In a period fraught with many urban ills, Moody attempted a solution. He became for many evangelical Christians the model urban missionary. Although he may at times have been unorthodox in his methods, his message was familiar. It was a call to conversion and charity grounded in a simple reading of the Bible. This was Moody's personal and institutional legacy.

## **B. Analysis**

*"Although Mr. Moody labored on behalf of the individual, he was also interested in society. His conception of the Gospel was comprehensive and was not indifferent to man's intellectual and physical needs. He placed first emphasis on spiritual values because he insisted that the most efficacious means of reformation was through the individual."*

—William Moody<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> John McDowell, *What D. L. Moody Means to Me: An Anthology of Appreciations and Appraisals of the Beloved founder of the Northfield Schools* (East Northfield, MA: The Northfield Schools, 1937), 8.  
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*“When I was at work in the City Relief Society, before the fire, I used to go to a poor sinner with the Bible in one hand and a loaf of bread in the other... My idea was that I could open a poor man’s heart by giving him a load of wood or a ton of coal when the winter was coming on, but I soon found out that he wasn’t any more interested in the Gospel on that account. Instead of thinking how he could come to Christ, he was thinking how long it would be before he got another load of wood. If I had the Bible in one hand and a loaf in the other the people always looked first at the loaf; and that was just contrary to the order laid down in the Gospel.”*

—Dwight Moody<sup>38</sup>

Dwight Moody believed that the fundamental cause of the urban ills plaguing the United States and the United Kingdom was human sinfulness. He believed sin was personal and traceable to the sin of Adam. Consequently, he believed that only personal conversion could ultimately mitigate social ills. His vision was to see individual lives transformed by the gospel, and to see the converted individually and corporately preach to the lost and feed and clothe the poor. In short, Moody’s theology drove his analysis of and response to urban social issues.

Nonetheless, as indicated by the first quote above, Moody was sensitive to the plight of the urban poor and, as we have seen, worked to address their plight. This has often been overlooked in examinations of Moody’s life and work. Too often, the second of the above quotes has been used as the definitive statement of Moody’s work, rendering him the key figure in the so-called “Great Reversal.”

However, when Moody said that the gospel came before bread, he was speaking of Matthew 6:33, which reads, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Moody was arguing that

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<sup>38</sup> Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 431, 432.

humans must seek God as an end in himself, not as a means to the end of physical blessing. In the sentences preceding the above quote, Moody said,

The whole of my early life was one long struggle with poverty;  
but I have no doubt it was God's way of bringing me to himself.  
And since I began to seek first the kingdom of God, I have never  
wanted for any thing: God has added all other things unto me.  
But it will not do to seek Christ because of what you hope to  
make by it. I used to make a mistake on that point.<sup>39</sup>

The overall point of the talk was about priorities; Moody exhorted the lost to convert, and for the converted to evangelize. Specifically, Moody was arguing people must put God first, and only then will the other blessings come. This principle applied to evangelism as well. In the context of evangelism, Moody believed that sinners must understand the issue at hand is their relationship with God, not merely free bread. Further, Moody was talking about the role of evangelists—not how all Christians should behave. In the same paragraph he said, “Dr. Chalmers used to forbid his missionaries giving away money or supplies. He said those things ought to come by other hands...”<sup>40</sup> Moody's point was not that Christians should not give to the poor; rather, he was explaining that evangelists and missionaries needed to make sure to keep the gospel at the forefront of their work.

One other point is in order. There is an old maxim, “actions speak louder than words.” In Moody's case, this is telling. The previous chapter outlined Moody's actions, his charitable work, his support for temperance and his great efforts in education for the poor. Those actions make it clear that his statement about giving a Bible before bread was not polemic against Christian charitable work.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 431, 432.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 431.

Nonetheless, the question of Moody's role in the so-called "Great Reversal" remains. One way to understand this "Great Reversal" is to look at Moody's relationship with what became the Social Gospel movement. One of the questions raised at the beginning of this thesis had to do with Moody's relationship to the Social Gospel movement. Admittedly, Moody lived before the movement's full blossoming. However, as we have seen, Moody was well known and even admired by early advocates of the Social Gospel like Lyman Abbott and Washington Gladden. Both wrote publicly of their regard for Moody years after Moody's death.<sup>41</sup> Both men spoke at the Northfield Bible Conferences and at some of his evangelistic crusades. We have seen how Moody loved to engage speakers in informal conversation for his own edification. Undoubtedly, he engaged those two in conversation about their beliefs. Yet Moody never expressed sympathy for their positions and, in fact, he played a part in their rejection by later Fundamentalists. Moody popularized three doctrines: original sin and personal depravity, the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible, and premillennialism—all of which were fundamentally incompatible with the Social Gospel movement.

Moody, as we have observed, believed sin was personal, not social. Although we have seen that Moody began questioning social structures like big business and trusts towards the end of his life, he still maintained that poverty was a function of personal sin. As such, he viewed attempts at mere social restructuring as doomed. As Moody saw it, the problem was the human heart, not the community. If enough hearts were changed, their communities would follow. Given these commitments, Moody would never accept efforts at restructuring society as an ultimate solution, because they failed to deal with the fundamental issue of personal sin.

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<sup>41</sup> Lyman Abbott, *Reminiscences* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), 479; and Washington Gladden, *Recollections* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), 428.

By contrast, proponents of the Social Gospel conceived of humans as fundamentally good and capable of being perfected. They saw the human condition as being a kind of curable selfishness.<sup>42</sup> This concept of sin was fundamentally at odds with Moody's position. Moody believed humans were sinners by nature and that only a supernatural act of God could remedy this problem.

We have also seen the central role the Bible played in Moody's life, and noted that while he did not articulate a developed theory of inerrancy, he clearly and repeatedly defended the reliability of the Bible. His extensive use of "Bible readings" implicitly reinforced this doctrine of inerrancy. Consequently, while Moody may have worked with higher critics like Coffin and Harper, his teachings and practice were incompatible with their hermeneutics. As the Social Gospel movement came of age around the time of World War I, it increasingly leaned on higher criticism. To the extent that the movement embraced higher criticism, it distanced itself from Moody's beliefs.

Moody was not only committed to premillennialism, he was crucial in its propagation. Premillennialism played a prominent role in the preaching at his revivals. Millions of collections of his sermons were sold, and most contained a sermon on premillennialism. His Bible conferences featured an array of prominent premillennial advocates. The concept of the Kingdom of God as it was articulated by men like Adolph Harnack would drive the Social Gospel supporters, especially Gladden and Rauschenbusch.<sup>43</sup> This concept of the Kingdom was fundamentally at odds with premillennialism.

The Social Gospel Movement's concept of sin, view of scripture and idea of the Kingdom of God were antithetical to the views Moody championed. Consequently, Moody did not interact directly with the Social Gospel movement, nor were his

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<sup>42</sup> N. A. Magnuson, "The Social Gospel" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), 1027-29.

<sup>43</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 85-93.

teachings compatible with it. However, given his prominence, Moody clearly played a significant role in raising the visibility of the plight of the urban working masses and he called on members of the evangelical church to apply their faith to this problem. Moody was at the forefront of reaching out to the nominal and non-churched urban masses. Lyman Abbott attested to this when he declared that “No man on either side of the ocean has done so much as Mr. Moody to solve practically the problem often and laboriously discussed: How to carry the Gospel to non-churchgoers.”<sup>44</sup>

Conversely, George Marsden has pointed out how some of these same theological ideas fed into what would later become Fundamentalism. Specifically, he cited Moody’s conservative views on the Bible and his premillennialism.<sup>45</sup> In addition to Marsden’s list, Moody’s concept of sin and redemption played a prominent role in later Fundamentalism, as did his commitment to evangelism and foreign missions.<sup>46</sup> Yet, as Marsden also pointed out, Moody differed from later Fundamentalism on one crucial point essential to the movement: he was unalterably opposed to conflict, a trait that was grounded at least partially in his concept of God’s love.

It goes well beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the validity of the “Great Reversal” thesis or to explore the degree to which the thesis can be accurately applied to Fundamentalism in the 1920s. However, several conclusions about Moody’s relationship to these ideas can be drawn. It is clear that Moody’s theology was incompatible with the Social Gospel movement. It is also clear that Moody’s theology raised themes that would be important to later Fundamentalism; in fact, the Fundamentalists would use many of these themes against proponents of the Social Gospel movement. Nevertheless, Moody did have a social vision and he was influential

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Olenik, 29.

<sup>45</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 33.

<sup>46</sup> C. T. McIntyre, “The Fundamentals” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), 436.



in raising the plight of the urban poor. Here Marsden seems to have overstated his case when he claimed that Moody “dropped direct social involvement.”<sup>47</sup> Moody did engage in programmes of social reform, temperance, education, the Freedman’s Bureau and the YMCA. In fact, education became a central focus during the latter part of his life. While Moody made evangelism the focus of most of his schools, it was not the only focus. Moberg was also in error in arguing that Moody believed attempts at social reform were a waste of time and diverted energy from soul winning.<sup>48</sup> Clearly, Moberg’s comments were a misrepresentation of Moody’s view. Moody did in fact work to educate the poor and was involved in charitable activities that addressed the needs of the poor. He simply made evangelism the priority.

As we have seen, Moody did occasionally speak briefly on other social issues and he certainly believed in and practised charity. Indeed, according to Moody, love for others was one of the central teachings of the Bible. However, he was loathe to allow these to supplant personal conversion, because only personal conversion could solve the ultimate problem, sin. Therefore, if later Fundamentalism is indeed guilty of the “Great Reversal” then, at worst, Moody is only partially to blame. While Moody’s commitment to making conversion central could lead to a rejection of social criticism and action, it certainly does not logically follow that it must produce that effect. Further, in continuity with earlier evangelicals like Finney, he embraced temperance and education.

It must also be kept in mind that Moody never conceived of himself as a theologian, a spokesperson for a movement or even a pastor. Moody’s views reflected his calling as an evangelist. His advice to fellow evangelists was consistent: stay focused on the gospel.<sup>49</sup> Moody had friends who, as pastors, spoke to social and

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<sup>47</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 37.

<sup>48</sup> Moberg, 33.

<sup>49</sup> Findlay, *American Evangelist*, 277.

political questions much more directly, men like F. B. Meyer and Charles Spurgeon.<sup>50</sup> Moody never criticized them. Moody's concern was that the preaching of the gospel remain preeminent, not that all Christians or Christian workers fulfil the calling of full-time evangelist. If later Fundamentalists engaged in a "Great Reversal" because of Moody's work, they were guilty of misunderstanding how Moody understood his role as an evangelist.

The question remains as to how Moody's relationship with the "robber barons" of the time influenced his social vision. Likewise, the question of how his middle-class Victorian values and commitment to the Republican Party affected his social vision remains open. About these questions, several conclusions can be drawn.

Moody's relationship with the business community has led to speculation about its impact on his political and social views. Moberg argued that these relations "colored his perspective and lent support to his opinion that attempts at social reform were a waste of time..."<sup>51</sup> It is true that D. W. Whittle, a confidant and the father of William Moody's wife, once remarked that one of Moody's greatest potential flaws was his desire to work with the rich and powerful.<sup>52</sup> However, there is no hard evidence of any *quid pro quo* existing between the business community and Moody. As we have seen, at times Moody's comments cohered with the views of the business community. However, his comments were limited and there is no direct evidence that Moody took his cues from the business community. Further, we have also seen Moody's willingness to criticize the business community sharply. On the other hand, it would be naïve to assume that his relationships with some members of the business community had no influence at all on him. It goes beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the motives of

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<sup>50</sup> The previous chapter included some of Spurgeon's work. For a complete examination of Meyer's approach, see Ian Randall, *Spirituality and Social Change: The Contribution of F. B. Meyer (1847-1929)* (London: Paternoster Press, 2003).

<sup>51</sup> Moberg, *Great Reversal*, 33.

<sup>52</sup> George, *Mr. Moody*; and Bebbington, "Transatlantic," 85- 86.

all of Moody's supporters, but it is surely the case that some of Moody's financial backers were not solely motivated by Christian charity. Whatever their motives were, Moody was forthright about his own. His theological beliefs drove him to preach the gospel to the working masses. In fact, he often tried to get some members of the business community to leave their careers and join him in evangelistic work.<sup>53</sup> Given what we have seen about the strength of Moody's theological commitments, it would be equally naïve to argue that what he heard from the business community was determinative in how he approached urban social problems.

As noted in the introduction, some scholars have tried to argue that Moody's views found their origin in the middle-class values of the day and that his efforts at urban evangelism are best understood as an effort in social control. The introduction cited Davidoff and Hall's research which indicated that the middle-class values of the Victorian era found their origin in the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century. We have already noted the important role English evangelicals like Spurgeon played in shaping Moody's opinion. Spurgeon articulated those middle-class values that Davidoff and Hall traced to the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century. Specifically, Moody embraced those values of work, selflessness, order and charity. However, Moody was raised by a single mother in relative poverty in rural western Massachusetts. What's more, America was a more egalitarian society than Victorian England. Consequently, it is hard to measure the influence English middle-class values played in Moody's rearing.

Because a single mother raised Moody, the question of evangelicalism's impact on women is important. Nancy F. Cott has done significant research on the relationship between evangelicalism and women in New England. Cott's study focused on women,

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<sup>53</sup> Dorsett, *Passion*, 263. Dorsett makes this point: he notes Moody was successful with Sankey, Whittle, Bliss and others but was never able to convert Wanamaker into a full-time evangelist.

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and she demonstrated convincingly that evangelicalism played a definitive role in shaping women's roles. She also noted that the evangelical revivals of the early nineteenth century promoted the same values of order, work and charity. These were particularly important for women's religious work and help explain the proliferation of women's voluntary associations that arose from the revivals.<sup>54</sup> Certainly, Moody's mother would have been influenced by evangelicalism's impact on women's roles. We know she was hard working, strict and charitable, even though the family struggled to make ends meet. She also read to them regularly from the Bible and a devotional book.<sup>55</sup>

At this point, it is clear that evangelical teaching expressed the middle-class values of work, order, charity and selflessness. If Cott is correct, then as a New England woman, his mother's conception of her responsibilities found its origin in evangelicalism. Therefore, to the extent that Moody derived the values of hard work, charity, order and selflessness from his mother and middle-class values, they have their ultimate origin in evangelicalism.

Further, as I have pointed out throughout the thesis, Moody was willing to question the practices of the middle class if they interfered with his commitment to evangelism and Christian work. As a young man, he drew the scorn of the established church by his aggressive work in "the Sands" district of Chicago. At times, his insistent commitment to make evangelism the priority brought criticism from the clergy during the Civil War. Moody consistently pushed the boundaries on women's roles in his educational and religious work. He demanded his schools be integrated racially and included people of colour in his campaigns. Therefore, while being sensible, businesslike and reflecting middle-class decorum, Moody was also willing to be

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<sup>54</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 126-159.

<sup>55</sup> William R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 20-27.

unconventional in the practice and propagation of his faith. When Moody perceived a conflict between the Bible and middle-class values, he sided with the Bible. He only relented when he believed that he could expand his gospel witness by conforming to the social norms. The clearest illustration of this was his acquiescence to segregated meetings in the South. Even then, his goal was subversive, as he believed conversion was the key to solving racial prejudice.

It is fair to conclude that because of his enormous popularity, Moody was instrumental in reinforcing and propagating the values of charity, hard work, order and selflessness. It is also true those values were often equated with the middle class, especially in England. While it is possible that Moody conceived of himself as bringing middle-class sensibilities to the unwashed masses, that is not where the evidence points. Moody was concerned about society but as a premillennialist he was dubious about society's future. Moody believed in helping the poor and in hard work because he believed the Bible demanded both. While working against social ills, he did not believe in trying to form a perfect society. His goal was to get people saved and provide comfort for the poor as he anticipated the return of Jesus. Further, Moody broke with the middle class when their values clashed with his reading of the Bible. Consequently, while it is difficult to argue that middle-class values played no part in Moody's social vision, it is equally difficult to assert that they played a larger role than Moody's theological commitments.

David Bebbington has argued that social control theory is problematic as well, referring particularly to Moody's work in the United Kingdom. Bebbington cited John Coffey's work, which argued that Moody represented the values of American democracy against the aristocratic social structure of the United Kingdom. Further, Bebbington showed that lower classes did attend Moody's revivals, and he noted the horrified response of the British elite to the suggestion that Moody hold services at the

prestigious Eton College. Bebbington concluded that Moody was an “unashamed populist.”<sup>56</sup> This is hardly the attitude of an agent for social control.

Similarly, Moody championed lay ministry. Moody remained a layperson and was a powerful model for the importance of lay ministry. Moody incorporated laypeople throughout his evangelistic crusades, people of various races and both genders. He started the Chicago school specifically to train lay workers. As we have seen, part of his rationale for the Chicago school was his belief concerning the vital importance of lay ministry. Indeed, it was because of the significant role he gave laypeople that the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed concerns during Moody’s campaign of 1873 – 75.<sup>57</sup> This was Moody challenging the social order, not protecting it.

Moody’s attitude towards Roman Catholicism does not fit the social control theory either. As has been noted, Moody’s generous spirit towards Roman Catholics stood in sharp contrast to many evangelicals who saw Catholicism as a threat to both American and British society. Moody’s goal was not to turn Catholics into evangelicals; it was to get them committed to Christ. Nowhere was this more evident than in his home town of Northfield. Moody’s daughter-in-law made this clear in an interview conducted in 1958. She recalled, “There were many Catholics who came here to work

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<sup>56</sup> George, *Mr. Moody*; Bebbington, “Transatlantic,” 86, 87; and Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 48. James Findlay also points out how Moody’s views on issues in Britain often reflected the “. . . democratic biases so common to American thought generally.” Findlay, *Moody*, 361.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Archbishop Tait to Lord Cairns, 18 May 1875. Lambeth Palace Library archive volume 94, pp.203-213. It reads in part, “It is chiefly from the “After-Meeting” for confession of sin and for guidance of the conscience, as they have been described to me, that I am apprehensive lest evil may arise. I cannot think that the delicate and difficult duty of the ministers to anxious souls ought to be entrusted to any, who have neither been set apart by the Church for this special office, nor have been given proof of such a spiritual insight as may in certain cases be held to take the place in this particular of the regular call to the cure of souls. I cannot but fear, from what I have heard, that the counsel given at the meetings must often be crude and founded upon no knowledge of the real circumstances and state of mind of those to whom it is addressed; while there is danger also lest some self-constituted advisers of others may do harm to themselves, seeking to be leaders where in truth they have much need to be led – I learn also, that in the organization for addressing God publicly in prayer, a great deal too much is trusted to the readiness of anyone who may be present to accept, without due preparation, the grave responsibility of guiding the devotions of the multitude assembled.”

the buildings and they had no church in town and he helped them build a church and gave them an organ ... (He) did all he could to start this Catholic Church. I think he was criticized for that by some people.”<sup>58</sup>

Moody’s political commitment to the Republican Party was significant in understanding how he viewed various levels of government, but not in understanding his social vision. His son Paul wrote that Moody “was a Republican all his days.” Paul concluded that Moody “believed that [prohibition] as well as most issues should be decided and controlled on the local level.”<sup>59</sup> As Paul’s remark indicated, Moody believed government had a role in restraining evil and promoting good behaviour. Moreover, as a good Republican he believed primarily in limited, local government. This opinion likely stemmed from Moody’s belief that the fundamental problem was sin, and that no government, either local or federal, could ultimately solve that problem.<sup>60</sup>

The third question raised in the introduction involved Moody’s understanding of the role of evangelism, charity and attempts at social change. Because Moody saw social ills as a function of sin, he believed any attempt to effect lasting social change without personal conversion was doomed. However, he did believe attempts to better society that included evangelism and flowed from conversion were legitimate. Moody believed that God is love and that this attribute of God should be an attribute of His followers. Christians were called to love the last, the least and the lost. This became the agenda for his life. He preached the gospel, supported temperance and built schools for the poor. He supported work by others to provide for the basic needs of the poor.

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<sup>58</sup> May Whittle Moody (Mrs. W. R. Moody), interview by Bernard DeRemer, Northfield, MA, August 7, 1958, transcript, Moody Bible Institute Archives, Chicago, IL.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Moody, *My Father*, 47-48.

<sup>60</sup> Daniels, *Moody: His Words*, 185-86.

However, he rejected any attempt to subordinate or eliminate the call to personal conversion.

Dwight Moody believed that mass conversion was the only antidote to the urban ills in the United States and the United Kingdom. This belief was grounded in his theological convictions. He believed the Bible taught individuals were ruined sinners that could only be redeemed by Christ through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. He believed the Bible taught that the world would decline until Jesus returned a second time. These beliefs were reinforced and modelled by men he admired. Therefore, he rejected political solutions while supporting institutional responses that included the message of the gospel. Moody's goal was to see individuals transformed by the gospel, who would in turn, individually and corporately, preach to the lost and serve the poor.

It is also evident that Moody was an individualist who had no concept of structural or social sin. For Moody, sin was personal and salvation was personal. A reflection on Dwight Moody by his son, Paul, is worth noting at this point. Writing in the mid-twentieth century, Paul rightly pointed out that his father belonged to the nineteenth century. Paul noted his father was twenty when Darwin's work, *On the Origin of Species* was published. Moody was at his prime in the 1870s and 1880s, and for those days he was progressive. Thus, while Moody may be conservative by twentieth-century standards, in his day he was liberal in the sense that he was an innovator.<sup>61</sup> Moody's genius and creativity were in the practical realm, not the theoretical. His vision to carry Christianity to the working classes was almost breathtaking in its scope and innovation. His audacity and optimism in light of the overwhelming conditions in the cities seems astonishing. It must be remembered that Moody lived with the problems; he was not an academic describing the problems in the

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<sup>61</sup> Olenik, 39.



abstract. Moody struggled with poverty personally and saw it alleviated in his own life by the work of individuals. He underwent a personal conversion. These were powerful lessons. It is hard to conceive that a man with no more than five years of formal education was able to manage and provide vision for the formidable empire amassed around him by the time of his death. However, it is easy to see how a person living during his time with his experiences, temperament and educational background had trouble grasping the complex nature of the problem.

It is also evident that Moody's vision included an inherent tension. While believing society was ultimately doomed, he was optimistic about effecting mass conversion in order to alleviate social ills. It is not clear how Moody reconciled his pessimism about the trajectory of society with his optimism about evangelism. Moody either did not recognize the issue, or could not resolve it and simply chose to live with the tension.

Evangelicalism, as a movement, was committed to preaching the gospel and caring for the poor. Moody embraced this ethos, and like Finney, made evangelism central. Moody reinforced the tendency that emerged during the Revival of 1857–1858 to address social issues in an individualistic and pietistic manner. Moody had an urban social vision that guided his life and work. It was the product of his theology and his theology had its origins in his personal experience. In the end, Moody, perhaps more than any other evangelical figure during his time, worked to solve the problems that developed in the urban centres in the United States and the United Kingdom. Driven by his theological convictions, Moody worked to develop and support institutions and movements that reflected those convictions and targeted the urban poor. In terms of evangelicalism and the urban issues of the second half of the eighteenth century, Moody's legacy was his conversion-based social vision and its resultant institutions and movements.

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